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G. C.

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# **H O P E**

**ITS LIGHTS AND SHADOWS**



H O P E  
ITS LIGHTS AND SHADOWS

WITH OTHER POEMS

BY THE  
REV. GEORGE JACQUE

AUTHOR OF 'THE CLOUDS,' ETC.

(*Received of the Rev. George Jacque  
the sum of £1.00*)

WILLIAM BLACKWOOD AND SONS  
EDINBURGH AND LONDON  
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TO

JOHN RITCHIE FINDLAY, ESQ.

*This Volume*

IS INSCRIBED BY HIS OLD FRIEND

THE AUTHOR



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# HOPE:

## ITS LIGHTS AND SHADOWS.

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### CANTO I.

*Hope—Ruin—Agents of Ruin—Ruins.*

Busy Hope with tube and bowl,  
Blows her air-bells to and fro ;  
Up into the air they go,  
Some fly high, and some fly low,  
Soon to reach their destined goal :—  
But be it far, or be it near,  
Each at last drops down—a tear !

Floating jewels in the sky,  
Shining with prismatic ray !—  
Soon you perish by the way,  
Struck by bird, or jutting spray,  
Or by wing of butterfly ;  
Or self-destroyed, you disappear,  
And forthwith fall to earth—a tear !

Is it well to use us so,  
Luring only to deceive ?  
“ Yes ! ’tis better to believe,  
Though o’er blighted hopes you grieve,  
Than to pine in hopeless woe.  
Better trust to things of air,  
Than be victims of despair.”

---

## I.

Hope stands aloft on sun-illumined height,  
Her golden tresses waving in the light.



With wreath of amaranths her brow is bound,  
And bright with gems her garments sweep the ground.  
With smile seraphic, and with beaming eye,  
She bids, with beck'ning hand, the world draw nigh,  
And points exultant to a land of rest,  
Which basks in sunshine in the radiant west.  
Responsive to her call, the world appears,  
On tiptoe stands, and gazes through its tears.  
The cheering sight each throbbing bosom fires,  
For each discovers what he most desires.  
Ambition sees its palace and its throne,  
And fame detects, and pleasure marks its own,  
And all the passions kindle at the sight,  
And feast in prospect on the far delight ;  
For prompt, ingenious, and indulgent Hope,  
Draws out for each a special horoscope.  
And who would gaze on gloomy landscapes nigh,  
When scenes of beauty in the distance lie ?—  
Scenes ever shifting, and for ever new,  
Fair as the morn, and fresh as morning dew ;  
Whilst o'er them all the blue of distance lies,  
Serene and soft as lake-reflected skies.

## II.

But if in front an Eden bright expands,  
Behind a jungle, harsh and sullen, stands—  
And desert wastes on every hand appear,  
And piles of ruins stretching far and near—  
Which in its folds a lurid vapour shrouds,  
As when the sky is charged with thunder-clouds.  
And yonder, huge and gaunt, with hoary beard  
And hollow eyes, and swathed in vesture weird  
Of matted nettles wrought, and close around  
His furrowed brow a withered chaplet bound,  
Recumbent lies, outstretched in pond'rous power,  
The giant Ruin on his blasted tower :  
Whilst all around him, thunder-split and charred,  
Lie leafless trees upon the shrivelled sward.

## III.

He westward looks with calm complacent eye,  
And grimly smiles at Hope's emblazoned sky,  
And then turns round and eyes with swelling pride,  
His own vast empire stretching far and wide,

And pleased reflects, whilst other empires fade,  
His own survives on sure foundations laid :  
For everywhere his faithful minions lurk,  
And ply unwearied their incessant work ;  
And in their task their utmost strength employ  
The works of man to weaken or destroy.  
Some sap the sea-bank, some the lofty tower,  
Some spread the fungi, others wield the power,  
Of frost, and flood, and fire, and under ground  
The hidden spring dissolves the solid mound.  
With damp, and moth, and worm, and iron ore,  
Some rot, or rust, or through the rafter bore.  
And others mounted on the tempest's wing,  
Ships, men, and forests, to destruction fling ;  
Whilst underneath, the subterranean fire,  
Gives birth to earthquakes and volcanoes dire,  
Which blight, and blast, and blot out tree and town,  
And swallow fleets and fertile islands down.

## IV.

And whilst these powers and their confederates toil,  
The works of man to mutilate and spoil,

Death with his legions prowls the earth around,  
And life and hope lays prostrate with the ground.  
And other powers, beneath the Tyrant's sway,  
Prone at his feet, the mind in ruins, lay ;  
And worse than all, by slow insidious art,  
Vice saps its way into the cozened heart.  
Ah ! who can tell until the day of doom,  
What countless hopes lie buried in the tomb !  
Like gourds they spring, and yield a brief delight,  
Live out their day, and perish in a night.

## v.

Wide is the empire which the Despot owns,  
Alike in frigid and in torrid zones,—  
Spoils on the land, and spoils beneath the wave,—  
The earth a churchyard, and the sea a grave.  
Hence o'er the subject world destruction stalks,  
And man the ruin, amidst ruins walks.

## vi.

Direct the glass to yonder distant skies,  
East from that tower on which the Titan lies,

And take in portion of the huge domains,  
O'er which his sceptre unmolested reigns !  
Seest thou the sands which yonder desert flings,  
Above the tombs and palaces of kings,  
And forests waving o'er the lapping flood,  
Where once a city, deemed eternal, stood :—  
While nigh at hand, on every side are cast,  
The shapeless fabrics of a faded past,—  
Embodied hopes, which once in beauty shone,  
And gladdened hearts which claimed them as their own ;  
What doleful tales could each in order tell,  
As Ruin smote, and down in dust it fell !

## VII.

Mark where yon bittern feeds its callow brood,  
There once a temple in its glory stood :  
And once a palace gleamed beneath the skies  
Where, undisturbed, the crested lapwing flies :  
And where yon ivy clasps the mouldering wall,  
And hooting owls hold nightly carnival,  
Where ravens hatch, and where the henbane grows,  
There once in pride a royal mansion rose.

## VIII.

Were earth a plain, and distance void of haze,  
And lessening power, to check the visual rays,  
What havoc wide would burst upon the view  
From zone to zone, from Old World to the New !  
Demolished towns that once in splendour shone,  
Their lustre quenched, their names and records gone ;  
A thousand heroes once a nation's boast,  
Whose deeds and dust are in oblivion lost ;  
And bards and sages left without a name,  
Who erst stood foremost in the ranks of fame ;  
Extinguished races covered with the sod,  
Thrones without kings, and shrines without a god :  
Ruins on ruins, wrecks of fallen pride,  
And hopes by myriads buried by their side.

---

Ruin is not ruin wholly,  
Evil is not evil solely,  
Each to good its tribute pays ;

Wisdom gathers wit from folly,  
And in depths of melancholy  
Genius sings its sweetest lays,—  
Ruin is not ruin wholly.

Thrusting all its claims aside,  
Ruin casts contempt on pride,  
Blending in one common doom,  
Palace, pyramid, and tomb.  
Nature with a mother's care,  
Strives the mischief to repair,  
And with unremitting toil,  
Brings she fitting seed and soil,  
Clothing broken arch and tower,  
Thick with ivy, shrub, and flower,  
Setting all the birds a-singing,  
Beauty thus from ashes bringing,—  
Ruin is not ruin wholly !

With inherent virtue fraught,  
Ruin opes the founts of thought,—

Fancy waked, the Past recalls,  
Crowds with guests the empty halls,  
Fills the lists with knight and steed,  
Throngs with huntsmen, holt and mead,  
Deeds of darkness she repeats ;  
Spectres haunt their old retreats,  
And the landscape all around  
Turns into enchanted ground,—  
Ruin is not ruin wholly !

Ruin from dismantled walls,  
On unthinking mortals calls,—  
“ Learn this lesson as ye pass,  
Earthly glory ends in grass !  
Rank nor power the tide can stay,  
Pomp and pleasure pass away !  
Sharp and ceaseless is the strife,  
Life with death, and death with life !  
Shun the ill that endeth never !  
Choose the good that lasts for ever ! ”  
Ruin is not ruin wholly !



All things thus, or good or ill,  
Useful aims and ends fulfil.  
Each to other addeth zest,  
Sweet to bitter, toil to rest;  
Morning sheds a richer light,  
From the darkness of the night;  
And to winter, summer owes  
Half the beauty of the rose.  
Sickness gives a charm to health,  
Bonds to freedom, want to wealth;  
Poisons play their needed part,  
Discords perfect music's art.  
Out of loss comes greatest gain,  
Life from death and peace from pain;  
Strength within from ills without,  
Firmest faith from darkest doubt.

Ruin is not ruin wholly,  
Evil is not evil solely;  
Last and best of lessons given,  
Ruin points from earth to heaven.

## CANTO II.

*Ruined hopes of the living—These hopes recalled, and  
their objects re-pictured by imagination—Each  
stands by and broods over his own—The diverse  
nature of these ruins, arising from difference in  
character, and pursuits, and relations in life.*

WHERE is the eye that never wept?—

Asleeping its first sleep.—

But soon as this first sleep is slept,

That eye shall wake to weep.

'Tis tears that first unseal the eye,

And tears that shut it when we die.

The streams are ever onward going,

The days, and months, and years,

But side by side with these are flowing,  
    The tide of human tears :—  
And when, and how, it so befell,  
Let Eden's blighted verdure tell.

'Tis true, that pleasure sometimes wears  
    The livery of grief ;  
And joy and laughter shed their tears,  
    To give the heart relief ;  
But these are tears that come and go,  
'Tis sorrow's tears that always flow.

I saw a fountain meet the day,  
    Beneath a thymy bank ;  
It winded on a little way,  
    And then for ever sank.  
They said that fount was true love's source,  
And that rill's way its wonted course.

A youth I spied of gentle air,  
    Beside Castalia kneeling,—

I asked him if the waters there  
    Had aught of bitter feeling.  
He lifted up a languid eye,  
And only answered with a sigh.

The cell I sought, the gay resort,  
    The peasant's lowly hearth—  
The halls of wealth, the camp, the court,  
    The palaces of earth,—  
But everywhere I saw the tear,  
Or wept, or waiting to appear.

And is there no unmingled joy,  
    That man may taste withal ?  
Has every streamlet its alloy,  
    And every spring its gall ?—  
All ! save the one which least we prize,  
The Living Fountain in the skies !

---

## I.

Spread out the pall above the Past,  
And from the Present lift the veil,  
That it may tell its mournful tale  
Of recent hopes to ruin cast,—  
The blighted hopes of living men,  
Which Mem'ry oft recalls again,  
And Fancy, with officious art,  
Re-pictures to the wounded heart.  
Those hopes revived, how changed are they  
That once in light and beauty lay  
Upon the Future's breast !—  
A phantom land of boundless scope,  
The crypts and catacombs of Hope  
By spectral things possest,  
Which seethe and surge for evermore,  
Like billows on a stormy shore.

## II.

As clouds in sultry skies their forms uprear,  
Now rise, now fall, collapse, and reappear,

So troops of crowding phantoms come and go,  
Among these heaps of retrospective woe.  
Each to his own his stealthy visits pays,  
To brood on hopes which lighted other days.  
Some stand like statues, motionless and white,  
Some melt in tears, and some their bosoms smite ;  
And peals of laughter break out here and there,  
The dread sardonic salvos of despair.  
Some linger long, and frequent visits pay,  
Some seldom come, and quickly go away ;  
But these are they, whose venerable woes  
Have sunk at last into serene repose ;  
Or those who smile at youthful hopes conceived,  
Which for a time they cherished and believed ;  
Or they who feel, had Hope fulfilled her word,  
What blessings had been lost, what ills incurred.

## III.

Oft hither comes the sickly and bereaved,  
The ruined merchant, and the maid deceived,  
The schemer foiled, in schemes he reckoned sure,  
The villain caught when most he seemed secure,

The man who once in royal favour basked,  
The traitor caught, the hypocrite unmasked,  
The miser cheated of his bags of gold,  
The beauty rouged, and prematurely old,  
The gambler ruined, the deserted wife,  
And all who miss their chiefest aim in life :—  
These, one and all, their stolen visits pay,  
And crowd the thoroughfares, both night and day,  
Of that grim tract, where Mem'ry sits and mopes—  
The vast necropolis of buried hopes.

## IV.

Though thick as insects in the summer air,  
The countless troops that thitherward repair,  
Each dwells apart, and sheds the secret tear,  
And nought around him does he see or hear.  
Absorbed and sad, the hopeless lover stands,  
With drooping head and ever-folding hands ;  
And poets pale with dreamy eye regard  
Their towering piles of brilliant hopes deferred ;  
And luckless models hedge the schemer round,  
Which Hope had once with fame and fortune crowned.

## V.

Mark yonder widow old who sits alone,  
Whose withered frame keeps rocking to her moan—  
She wistful gazes with a mournful pride  
Into an empty cradle by her side;  
And as she looks the cherished dead arise,  
And pass in turn before her weeping eyes.  
Within that cradle she had rocked and nurst  
Her last dear babe, as she had rocked the first ;  
And as she rocked, and to her infant sung,  
Hope after hope had to that cradle clung ;  
And round it still with fluttering wings they flit,  
And still refuse their ancient haunts to quit.

## VI.

'Midst heaps of ruined hopes, with solemn tread,  
A figure wanders with uncovered head ;  
A crown was torn from off that marble brow,  
A monarch once, a lonely exile now.  
With anguish he beholds his sceptre gone,  
And sees a stranger seated on his throne.



## VII.

With haggard cheek, and bent and wasted frame,  
Alone and friendless, and exposed to shame,  
An old blind Mentor sits. His hopes of youth  
Have long since perished. He had loved the truth,  
And spake, and reasoned with a thoughtless age,  
Which woke, not love, but blind vindictive rage.  
Yet not their wrath his firm resolve could shake,  
What conscience prompted, he implicit spake.

## VIII.

Of kindred type, behold that patriot band,  
Who oft-defeated, yet determined stand;  
And from the ruins all around them spread,  
Extort the living from among the dead,—  
Assured, though baffled, yet their country dear  
Will bless their names, and shed the grateful tear :  
But though they should their memory defame,  
And hold it up to obloquy and shame,  
Enough for them that they should toil and weep,  
That others may the distant harvest reap.

And thus they triumph o'er the hardest task  
Which love and duty can from mortals ask.  
Hail ! choicest of thy race, unselfish few !  
To justice ever, and to freedom true ;  
Who hate the wrong, and struggle for the right,  
Though life itself should perish in the fight.

## IX.

If aught that's noble can of man be said,  
'Tis self for good upon the altar laid !  
But good for self, wherever it is found,  
Is base and mean, though with a mitre crowned.  
Behold these twain, for truth and freedom's  
sake,—  
A Wallace on the block, a Tyndale at the stake !  
But mean the wretch who barter truth for pelf,  
Or wrongs his country to exalt himself.  
He may secure the giddy world's applause,  
But human praise annuls not heaven's laws.  
The hour is coming, and the fatal morn,  
When he shall wake to anguish and to scorn.

Though ill awhile, the good to earth may cast,  
The good will live, and triumph at the last !  
Hear Wisdom, as with earnest voice she calls—  
“Suspend thy judgment till the curtain falls !”

---

It is a heavy thing to bear,  
When love is forced to give  
Its hoarded treasures to despair  
And yet have power to live,  
And feel that everything has force,  
To bring the past again,  
With all its sweet and sacred things  
Converted into pain.

The heart sinks down as sinks a stone  
Into the ocean cast ;  
And there in darkness, and alone,  
It broods upon the past :

For wretched minds will ever dwell  
On blighted hopes and joys ;  
And vainly may remonstrance lift  
Her ineffectual voice.

And such a grief I once beheld  
In maiden young and fair ;  
And long, long years have not expelled  
That picture of despair.  
It comes afresh before my mind,  
As in the street I spy  
A gentle girl, with pallid cheek  
And drooping form, go by.

To lonely spots she oft would steal,  
Where she might sit and weep,  
Till nature, wearied out, would seal  
Her eyes in tranquil sleep.  
But even tears will come at length  
Their solace to deny ;  
For daily and consuming grief  
Will drain these fountains dry.

She ceased to weep, and people said,  
The worst was past and gone ;  
But still, with lowly, drooping head,  
She wandered forth alone.  
Her grief had sunk, as sinks a stream,  
Beneath the light of day,  
Which, though unseen, pursueth still,  
Its solitary way.

Ah ! who can tell what secret woes,  
What ruined hopes may lie  
Beneath a brow of calm repose,  
And brightly beaming eye !  
Grief wears her mask, like poverty,  
For well she knows 'tis vain  
To tell her woes to all she meets,  
And idly to complain.

She smiled to children as she passed,—  
How sad that smile, yet sweet !—  
Like moonlight on a statue cast,  
In some old, silent street.

And sheep familiar with her grew,  
Where she was wont to stray ;  
Nor brooding bird, nor hare withdrew,  
As she went on her way.

And if on worm she chanced to tread,  
She'd stoop with tearful eye,  
And lift and lay it in a place,  
Where it might safely lie.  
The smallest creature shared her love,  
And those were chiefly prized,  
Which suffered most at human hands,  
Or were the most despised.

A little homeless dog, one day,  
Her meek protection sought,  
And, touched with tender sympathy,  
She home the wanderer brought.  
And from that hour it clung to her,  
And was so kind and wise,  
That many thought, and said it was,  
An angel in disguise.

It feigned to chase each passing bird,  
And used each simple guile,  
To draw from her a pleasant word,  
And win her gentle smile.  
And none would it allow to come  
Its sleeping mistress near ;  
But bullied back, or beast, or man,  
For love had cast out fear.

The end was now approaching fast,  
For thin, and wan, and weak,  
She staggered as she onward passed,  
And red, red grew her cheek.  
The autumn claimed the waning year,  
And o'er the forests threw  
A robe of rainbows from the skies,  
As she is wont to do.

It was a day of sweetest mood,  
And long she toiled to gain  
A favourite hawthorn-tree, which stood  
Above the neighbouring plain.

Two feet or so above the ground  
It parted, swayed, and crooked,  
And formed a half-recumbent couch,  
Which to the eastward looked.

Long there she lay to gather strength,  
Death's prize, and beauty's pride ;  
And when she raised herself, at length,  
She oped her eyelids wide,  
And gazed upon the scene around  
With strange abstracted look,  
Like one who dreams of things gone by,  
Or reads upon a book.

The red sun set, the white moon rose,  
And there she was espied,  
Serene and pale, and cold in death,  
With Wanderer by her side.  
It was a sight that haunts me still,  
Though long, long years have fled—  
That fragile, fair, and lifeless form,  
With moonlight o'er it spread.



Beside that tree they buried her,  
And many mourned and wept;  
And when they let the coffin down  
Above it Wanderer leapt.  
And hard it was to get him out,  
And piteously he cried :  
Then down upon the grave he lay,  
And pined away and died.

They laid him at his mistress' feet,—  
And fitly lies he there ;  
For both had felt that love is sweet,  
And bitter is despair.  
And children, in the summer-time,  
When blooms the aged thorn,  
With nimble feet, and flowers, will come,  
Their twin graves to adorn.

## CANTO III.

*The hopes which sudden death arrests—The painter, sculptor, poet, historian, warrior, orator, the fool and sage,—all leave behind them unfulfilled hopes, projects unexecuted, and works unfinished — One solitary exception.*

SEAWARD still the streams are flowing,

Downward man is ever going—

Evermore and evermore ;

War may come, or peace may smile,

Still in troops the dead defile

Downward to the silent shore.

As the ages pass away,

Hosts are marching night and day,

Swelling like the rolling river ;  
Nor will cease that march until  
Ocean's tides and waves are still,  
And the streams are hushed for ever.

Sovereign of the countless dead !  
Wide as earth thine empire's spread—  
Silent, steadfast, and sublime ;  
Other empires rise and fall,  
Thine the surest throne of all—  
Old as is the course of time.

Kings to keep their own are straining,—  
They are losing, thou art gaining  
Month by month thy millions three.  
Vice, disease, war, flood, and fire,  
Thin their ranks, but raise thine higher,—  
Loss to them is gain to thee.

Widow, orphan, sexton maker,  
Pride-rebuker, sceptre-breaker,

Truth-revealer, conscience-stirrer,  
Realms afar to thee are given,  
Janitor of hell and heaven,  
King of darkness and of terror !

---

## I.

We marvel not when down is cast  
The withered tree before the blast,  
Nor wonder when the crazy mast  
Gives way before the gale ;  
But when, by unexpected stroke,  
In ruin falls the stately oak—  
Or, lightning-struck, a splintered wreck,  
The sturdy mast bestrews the deck,  
We marvel and bewail.  
But like unto the stately tree,  
Or goodly ship upon the sea,  
Life oft, in golden prime, by thee,

O Death, is smitten down,  
When full in view the goal appears,  
And Hope its cherished idol nears,  
And Triumph waits, with arm outspread,  
To place upon the victor's head  
The long-expected crown.  
A painter in his studio sits, and reads  
Of ancient heroes and their famous deeds—  
A theme to find, of valour or of woe,  
On which he may his utmost skill bestow.

## II.

As brilliant dramas in our dreams arise,  
And pass in rapid march before our eyes,  
A group historic, vividly defined,  
In marshalled trim deploys before his mind :  
The waiting sheet the instant sketch receives—  
A transcript just of what the mind conceives ;  
The canvas next the outline full displays,  
And clearer notions of the theme conveys,  
And hope, exultant, on the future draws,  
And points, prophetic, to a world's applause.

## III.

Now speed the hours in pleasing toil away,  
And all too short appears the summer day.  
A tunic here, and there a helmet gleams,  
And from those eyes a tide of passion streams ;  
Half-finished limbs, and hands, and arms appear ;  
Here knits a frown, and yonder drops a tear.  
The earnest artist speeds his work apace,  
And triumph sits on his impassioned face ;  
But whilst he fills that eye with martial pride,  
His powerless arm falls idly by his side,  
And back into his seat he, helpless, sinks,  
A human form that neither sees nor thinks.  
Unmoved, the creatures of his teeming brain  
Their parts, and places, and their looks, maintain,  
And gaze upon him where he, lifeless, lies,  
Untouched and heedless, with their lustrous eyes. ,

## IV.

From out a ponderous block there comes to light  
A gladiator grim, in act of fight.

His brawny limbs and sinewy arms he strains,  
And on his brow stand out the swollen veins ;  
While o'er his face is spread a savage glow,  
As if he gazed upon a prostrate foe.  
“To-morrow !”—as he lays his tools aside,  
Exclaims the sculptor, gazing back with pride—  
“To-morrow shall the finished work display !”  
But ere it comes Death summons him away.

## v.

Thus death arrests—and who can death withstand ?—  
The brush and mallet in the artist's hand ;  
And calls the statesman from his plans away,  
And stops the minstrel midway in his lay ;  
Suspends the pen of the historic sage,  
And lays it, useless, on the blotted page ;  
The warrior snatches from the winning fight,  
And sinks the vessel with the port in sight ;  
Compels the rogue to quit his darling schemes,  
The wise their projects, and the fool his dreams ;  
And whilst a crowd the orator admires,  
He drops upon the platform and expires ;

One looks his watch to see how time has sped,  
But Death replies, and lays him with the dead.

## VI.

And so, from age to age, from sire to son,  
Hopes run to waste, and works are left undone.  
If not before, in age it may be seen,  
That life a blunder and a crime has been.  
How false his thought who deems that all is done,  
Whilst life's chief labour has not yet begun!  
One, only One, with perfect truth could say,  
That all was finished ere He passed away.  
No man before, nor since, nor man to be,  
Shall ever more a like perfection see;  
For all who live and die beneath the sun  
Leave duties undischarged and works undone.  
Works! Hope arrays with blossoms bright and free,  
Thick as the clusters on the apple-tree.

## VII.

Thus life is but a half and ill told tale,  
A ship dismantled by the furious gale,



A Pisgah severed from the promised land,  
A feast cut short by a mysterious hand,  
A tower left standing with the workman's tools,  
A butt for satire, and the sport of fools.  
O'er every grave a broken column place—  
What suits for one will serve for all the race.  
For all alike, a like conclusion see—  
The same in kind, though different in degree.

---

A lonely road, beside a wood,  
Across a muirland led,  
And over it the waning moon  
A sickly radiance shed.  
Above the falling stars were shooting,  
And down below the owl was hooting.  
Along that dismal silent road  
A weirdlike man was seen to plod.  
A cowl and loose thin dress he wore,  
Which marks of lengthened service bore.

And as from side to side he swayed,  
His shambling limbs a creaking made.  
A robber issued from the wood,  
And said, in bold sarcastic mood,  
“ Good night, my friend ; the road is rough,  
And you seem travel-worn.  
Belike you’ve walked some fifty miles  
Since you set out at morn ? ”  
“ Twere not a thing to boast of, though  
That distance I had gone ;  
For I am lean and sparely clad,  
And baggage I have none.”  
“ You seem a stranger !—may I ask  
The land from whence you come ? ”  
“ By most ’tis reckoned far away,  
But counted near by some.”  
“ That’s rather odd. Some sea will it  
From other lands dissever ? ”  
“ Well, in a sense ; but some folks say  
That sea is but a river.”  
“ I see !—some lone and barren isle,  
Where sea-fowl have their home ? ”

"Not lone nor barren ; for the soil  
Is filled with fertile loam."

"If so, the emigrant ere now  
Had thither found his way ?"

"And so he has ; for numerous bands  
Are landing every day."

"Then must it soon be overstocked  
Unless the rush be stayed ?"

"Well, all as yet, as they arrive,  
Are landed gentry made."

"But what of that ?—the land's to clear,  
And drain, and plough, and sow."

"The land's already cleared for them,  
And each told where to go."

"A very small allotment, then,  
To each must be assigned."

"Each in his turn's allowed to take  
As much as he's a mind."

"Some legal quirk must lurk somewhere,  
To rob them of their toil."

"No ; all by royal charter are  
Infected in the soil."

"Ha, ha ! lawsuits and bickerings soon  
Will cause the thing to cease."

"For all the time that I've been there  
There has been nought but peace."

"No lawsuits ?"

"None."

"Nor rogues nor thieves

Their neighbours to abuse ?"

"Why should there be, since each has more  
Than he can rightly use ?"

"There must be something in the soil  
And climate of the place,  
If they thus widely differ from  
The rest of human race."

"It may be so ; but I avouch  
That what I say is true.

And if on oath, I would repeat  
What I have said to you."

"Come, now, my honest friend, for once  
Be candid, if you please,  
And own the land's infested with  
Malaria and disease."

"I will not own what is not true,  
But false as false can be ;  
There's not another land on earth  
From sickness half so free."

"If by your leanness I may judge,  
The land's but so and so."

'I told you it is rich,—and I  
Have reason good to know.

Tis true I'm thin ; but what of that ?

"Tis no fair test, I ween ;

For some get fat on little food,  
And gluttons oft are lean.

Nor is the land, as you may think,  
Possessed but by a few ;

For it was colonised of old,  
And year by year it grew,

Until its numbers are so great  
That none who therein dwell

The sum of its inhabitants  
Can accurately tell.

Nor do they care the roll to call,  
So long as there is room for all."

A meteor rose—te-whoood the owl—  
He flung aside his robe and cowl ;  
And there, beside that lonesome wood,  
A naked skeleton he stood.

## CANTO IV.

*Hopes crowned with success have their ruins—The youth, the man, the retired merchant, the successful politician, soldier, philosopher, and poet—Disappointments a blessing when they lift the mind to higher objects.*

Down in a lone sequestered dell,  
    Deep-shadowed, moist, and cool,  
Beneath a cataract that fell,  
    Into a mantling pool,  
An old man sat, in raiment weird,  
With swarthy brow, and snowy beard.  
He seemed to be, from where I stood,  
Some withered clump of rotten wood  
With moss and lichens grey o'erspread,—  
The shroud the forest gives its dead.

As I with reverent step drew near,  
I saw him wipe the frequent tear.  
“Father,” I said, “I grieve to see”——  
But turning round he looked at me,  
And with a pensive smile he said,  
“These are not bitter tears I shed!—  
From far-off regions have I come,  
To see once more my childhood’s home,  
Its cherished haunts, and most of all,  
To sit beneath this waterfall.  
Here when a child I used to play,  
And think too short the longest day:  
My brothers four and sisters three,  
Made up a joyful company.

“Since then, some threescore years or more,  
This weary world I’ve wandered o’er,  
And oft in dreams when far away,  
Again a child, I here would play,  
And feel as I felt then, and see  
My brothers four and sisters three,—  
And when I woke, ’twas sad to feel,  
The blissful vision was not real,





“And when with hot and fevered breath,  
I lay delirious nigh to death,  
I saw that fall distinct as now,  
And felt its spray upon my brow,  
And heard its voice as sweet and clear  
As now it falleth on my ear.

“And oft I wondered in my mind,  
If that dear fall I left behind  
Still fell with gentle sweep and slow  
Into that eddying pool below.

“And strange to me the thought appears,  
That all along through these long years,  
It ne'er has made a moment's stay,  
But plunged and shouted night and day.

“All else is changed !—my playmates gone,  
And I left in the world alone,  
To gaze with dim eyes on that scene,  
And think and sigh o'er what has been :  
And yet I would not have depart  
The sweet sad thoughts that fill my heart,  
For they the pleasing past restore,  
And give me back my friends once more.

They have not grown old like me,  
Each in the bloom of youth I see  
As when I left them on the day  
That I as ship-boy went away.

“ I know the days are short and few  
When I like them must bid adieu  
To this strange world, so full of snares,  
And blighted hopes, and fretting cares,  
And grovelling aims, and selfish schemes,  
And pleasure's guilt-polluted streams,  
And all the countless ills that wait  
On man's debased and checkered state.

“ I also know it matters not  
Where these old bones of mine may rot,  
And yet my wish is when I die  
That I should in this dear spot lie.  
It is a foolish thought, I know,  
And yet my heart will have it so :  
For things of youth return in age,  
And ope afresh the storied page,—  
Not dim with twilight's fading light,  
But with the morning's radiance bright,

And all besprent with flowers and dew,  
As when at first they met the view.  
Then deem it not an idle thing,  
That age should back on childhood cling."

In that beloved and haunted spot  
The old man reared a little cot.  
And oft was heard, when winds were calm,  
The music of his evening psalm  
Commingling with the torrent's sound,  
And with the songs of birds around.

And thither oft did I repair,  
His hearth and frugal meal to share,  
For he was courteous, frank, and kind,  
And stored with truth my youthful mind,  
And loved to paint, when in the vein,  
The aspects of the moody main,  
And tell of ports where he had been,  
And fights and shipwrecks he had seen.  
But still I saw his heart concealed  
Some secret grief it ne'er revealed ;  
For sometimes would he pause and sigh,  
And sudden tears would fill his eye,

And then perforce he'd break the spell  
And finish what he had to tell.

When woods and fields grew silent all,  
And autumn's leaves began to fall,  
I found him dead, in act of prayer,  
With folded hands beside his chair.

I laid him where he wished to be,  
And raised that gravestone which you see ;  
And oft my steps are hither led  
To hold communion with the dead.

---

## I.

Wrecks not alone in withered hopes are found,—  
But in those hopes by full fruition crowned,

In ambush, Ruin lies.

The glowing tints which artist Fancy flung,  
Around those hopes when into life they sprung,  
Possession, disenchanting, day by day,  
Resolves at last into a sober grey,

Which other hue defies.

The rainbow disappears—the charm has fled,  
Which hope and distance o'er the prospect spread,  
And cold blank facts remain.

Thus as we chase, the coy horizon flies,  
And farther off on earth's green bosom lies  
To lure us on again.

The child for youth, the youth for manhood longs,  
And when it comes, the daily life it throngs  
With troops of cares, and cherished hopes depart,  
And leave a void within the aching heart ;  
And fond regret still backward turns the view  
To life's sweet morn when all was wet with dew,  
And full of fruits and flowers, and warbling streams,  
And singing birds, and youth's romantic dreams.

## II.

But Hope persistent to the future flies,  
And quick as clouds refill the empty skies,  
New bowers appear, and other prospects rise.  
She beckons thither with exulting hand,  
And points the pilgrim to the promised land.

---

He hastes afresh with bosom beating high  
To reach the pleasures which before him lie.  
But shortly, as before, possession shows,  
That every joy attracts its kindred woes.  
Thus thorns arise and choke the crowded way,  
Which Hope had made assiduously gay.  
The angel bride becomes the human wife,  
The blessing here, but there the bane of life :  
And children too, however fair and dear,  
Bring sleepless nights and many a bitter tear ;  
Nay not unoft with sorrow to the earth  
The grey hairs bring of her who gave them birth  
The real thus asserts its iron " must,"  
And lays our bright ideals in the dust.

## III.

Still Hope, untaught, on buoyant wing departs,  
To ply afresh her all-seductive arts.  
She rears a home of beauty and repose,  
Where life's declining day may calmly close.  
Full oft the fair enchantress has deceived ;  
Again she vows, and is again believed.

Thus 'neath the foliage of the waning year  
The punctual buds are waiting to appear ;  
And thus the moon has scarcely ceased to wane,  
When she puts forth her silver bow again.

## IV.

With unremitting toil of hand and brain,  
The merchant strives this last retreat to gain ;  
And fortune smiles, and with repose in view,  
He bids the world and all its cares adieu.

## V.

The change awhile his heart and thoughts engage,  
And second youth illumines the brow of age :  
But soon, alas ! as fade the clouds which lie  
In crimson glory on the evening sky,  
So quickly fades the bright and ruddy glow,  
Which hope and distance o'er the future throw.  
Excitement droops, reaction comes apace,  
And spreads its languor o'er the pallid face,  
And all the powers dejected stand at gaze,  
And on the ruin look with blank amaze.

The mind unharnessed seeks its ancient haunts,  
Repeats its toils, and feels its former wants,  
And wishes back with each returning day,  
What once it wished and strove to put away.  
The stream of life, unless 'tis urged along,  
Full shortly finds, and stands the swamps among,  
And so becomes a noisome stagnant pool,  
With slimy weeds and crawling reptiles full,—  
And thus do hopes which issue in success,  
Profuse in promise, still refuse to bless.

## VI.

Thrice blest reverses !—if they lift at last  
The subtle veil which o'er the mind is cast,  
That earthly hopes may in the end be seen  
To be, at best, what they have ever been—  
A fruit of Sodom, fair in form and skin,  
But only dust and rottenness within ;  
And looking up, the disabused mind  
Finds in the skies, where it alone can find,  
The hope assured, the bliss without alloy,  
The certain good, the never-failing joy :



Found but by few—but fewer still would find,  
If earth's enjoyments satisfied the mind.

## VII.

Nor wealth alone, nor ease, nor prosperous love,  
But fame alike, and power, deceptive prove.  
He who abandons home and health and ease,  
And climbs to place and power by slow degrees,  
Finds to his cost the rod which gives command,  
Becomes a serpent in his throbbing hand.  
Has kingly splendour reached proved what it seemed  
When first across the disc of hope it gleamed ?  
Have promised joys been found in brilliant wars,  
In deeds of arms and honourable scars ?  
Or has a medal or a star supplied  
The tardy joy which battle-fields denied ?  
Imparteth fame to seer's or minstrel's mind  
The full enjoyment he had hoped to find ?  
Each, disappointed, cries, "And is this all ?"  
And from his hand the tainted cup lets fall.  
The distant sherd that basks in summer's beams,  
A diamond bright of purest virtue seems.

The swift and lofty seem but low and slow,  
As we from either to a distance go ;  
But Hope at will can lift the lowly high,  
And make the bat on eagle's wings to fly.

---

An old man sat in an old arm-chair,  
When in there came with boisterous joy,  
His great-grandchild, a little boy,  
With a small arm-chair he had found somewhere  
In an old outhouse, up an old outstair ;  
And he set it down by the old man there.

It had been his own in early years,  
And thoughts came crowding everywhere  
From the dingy wood of that haunted chair ;  
And the old man's eyes ran down with tears,  
As he read that pictured hornbook o'er,  
Which gave him back the days of yore.

In turn his brothers and sisters ten  
Had claimed and called that chair their own ;  
As there each sat on his little throne—  
A little race of great small men—  
Like kings elsewhere for a little space,  
Till a rival came and took his place.

And another set, with toys and shout,  
His own six sons and daughters sweet,  
Had kept possession of that seat,  
Till the chair itself had thrust them out,  
As thrusts its teeming tenants forth  
The old ancestral arm-chair, earth—  
All saving one, a daughter fair,  
Who breathed her last in that loved arm-chair.

And then the chair it was put away ;  
And time rolled on, and one by one,  
A daughter now, and then a son,  
Went out into the world's highway.  
And after many years had gone,  
The old, old man was left alone,


Save by that boy, whose mother dear,  
Her widow's sorrows meekly bore,  
And watched his second childhood o'er,  
And strove his drooping heart to cheer.  
And there in tears, in his old arm-chair  
The old man sat with his hoary hair,  
And wrinkled front, and temples bare,  
And wept and gazed on that small arm-chair,  
Which his great-grandchild had put down there.

## CANTO V.

*Why the ruins of Hope are so manifold—Ignorance  
—Human knowledge imperfect at the best—Uncertainty of the elements—Self-deception—Conflicting interests and passions—Disease and death—The influence which trivial occasions often exert on human affairs.*

Down in the depths of yonder dell,  
A bowshot from the hunter's well,  
On hunchbacked hawthorn by its side,  
A stately larch looked down in pride,  
And seemed to wish some friendly blast,  
Its hated form to earth would cast.  
One winter night a tempest blew,  
And down the haughty larch it threw,  
Which fell with thundering crash, and rested  
Right on the hunch which it detested.

And there in safety it reposed,  
With half its roots to view exposed.  
And when the spring resumed its reign,  
It grew, and flourished green again.  
And kindly o'er its wounded breast  
The hawthorn spread its snowy vest ;  
And down its trunk, and o'er its head,  
Its fragrant breath and incense shed.  
And as the seasons passed away,  
In storm and calm secure it lay ;  
For deep with many a prong and coil,  
The hawthorn's roots had clasped the soil.  
Thus have we seen the stunted child,  
By brothers chidden and reviled,  
And anxious mother brooding o'er  
The poor misshapen thing she bore,  
With dark forebodings in her mind,  
Should he be left a waif behind.  
He grows apace, a silent boy,  
And earth and sky his thoughts employ,  
Until the printed page displays  
A world of wonders to his gaze !



And year by year, and day by day,  
He knowledge hoards, whilst others play;  
And scarcely youth with manhood blends,  
Ere fortune finds him powerful friends :—  
An usher first, a master soon,  
The pupil's pride, the parents' boon.  
Meanwhile the mother, in the son,  
Shares in the triumphs he has won;  
And back returns from foreign coast,  
The brother who despised him most,  
Constrained to seek the home he left,  
Alike of health and means bereft.  
The hawthorn by the hunter's well,  
The rest of this true tale will tell.

Let not the strong the weak decry,  
Nor let the rich the poor despise ;  
For strength may fail, and riches fly,  
And lowly things to greatness rise.


---

## I.

Is it from folly, accident, or fate,  
That blights so oft on Hope's creations wait ?  
A cause there is for each effect, if we  
Could all its roots and antecedents see.  
'Tis Reason's part to find a proper test,  
And furnish bases on which Hope may rest :  
She only looks if Faith be at her side,  
And forthwith opes her magic-lantern wide,  
And throws its pictures gleaming through the sky,  
Upon the empty screen the future holds on high.

## II.

Full many a cause contributes to beguile  
The facile mind, and serves to raise the pile  
Of wasted hopes, which darkens every state,  
But highest stands beside the palace gate.  
What every passing wind and wave can move,  
Must still precarious and uncertain prove.  
A firm foundation can the quagmire yield,  
Or brittle glass become a trusty shield ?





The unknown future must uncertain be,  
Yet this plain matter, folly will not see,  
But builds on quicksands palaces and towers,  
And in the clouds uprears elysian bowers.

## III.

Thus self-deceit inflated hopes conceives,  
Which blind desire implicitly believes ;  
And ignorance, as is its wont to do,  
Takes fact for fiction, and the false for true ;  
And even knowledge, partial at the best,  
Must all its issues on contingents rest,  
And run its hazards from the shifting forms,  
Of times and seasons, tides, and waves, and storms,  
And wars, and pestilence, and famines dire,  
And loss by floods, and accidents by fire,  
And all the things which unexpected rise  
To thwart the projects of the worldly wise.

## IV.

And worse than all to regulate and gauge,  
The passions take possession of the stage.

Fickle and fierce, from side to side they sway,  
And years of hope demolish in a day.  
Their plots in darkness, spite and envy hatch,  
And spider-like they for their victims watch :  
A spurious zeal to monomania turns,  
And with a bigot rancour fiercely burns :  
And wakeful jealousy with morbid eye,  
Sees proofs of guilt in harmless actions lie :  
Whilst dark revenge in secrecy conspires,  
And fans and feeds its self-consuming fires :  
And selfishness, with never-sated greed,  
Exacts and grasps, and scorns each generous deed :—  
By these, and kindred passions, checked and foiled,  
Hope of her fairest prospects is despoiled ;—  
And furthermore, disease its victims snares,  
And callous to appeal, no suppliant spares ;  
And daily, death its myriad hopes lays low,  
And clothes bereavement in her weeds of woe.

## V.

As if to check despondency and pride,  
And turn alike their hopes and fears aside,

---

Full oft do trivial agents intervene,  
Which change at once the actors and the scene.  
And thus the likely, disappointment breeds,  
And what was deemed improbable, succeeds ;  
For human foresight, even at the best,  
Is but surmise in robes of wisdom drest ;  
Hence unforeseen, despised, and petty things,  
Disturb the plans of peasants and of kings.

## VI.

Two sparks fly off !—a prairie bursts on fire,  
A magazine explodes,—a hundred men expire !  
A ship is sunk by one small wormy plank,  
And one unheeded breach in ocean bank,  
Engulfs a country in tumultuous waves,  
And buries thousands in untimely graves.  
One man infects a city with the plague,  
And deadly feuds arise from rumours vague.  
A lapdog leads to sanguinary brawls,  
A dove is caught, and leaguered D'Acres falls.  
Beethoven's mind a spider's death unnerves,  
A spider's web a Mahomet preserves.

A hero dies from sting of puny gnat,  
And Egypt owes her freedom to a cat.  
A Czar is saved from the assassin's blows  
By cries at midnight from affrighted crows.  
A spider reassures a faltering Bruce,  
And Rome is saved by cackling of a goose.

## VII.

In science, too, and in congenial art  
Have slight occasions played a leading part.  
A lamp is swung from temple-roof sublime,  
And straightway genius to the wheels of time  
The pendulum unites. Two boys at play  
Behold at hand an object far away,—  
The telescope is formed ! the worlds draw near,  
And worlds on worlds behind these worlds appear.  
An unknown weed is cast upon the beach,—  
An apple falls,—and weed and apple teach  
Two mighty truths to two receptive minds—  
The keys of nature one, and one a new world finds.

## VIII.

Thus oft have little things, or done or said,  
To noble arts and great discoveries led.  
And hence the world has been together brought  
In mutual feeling and exchange of thought,  
By needles, types, by water, and by fire,  
And, last of all, by telegraphic wire.  
What next may come this traffic to extend,  
And how at last that intercourse shall end,  
Is only known to the Omniscient Mind,  
By whom all things are ordered and designed.

Meanwhile 'tis sweet the pleasing hope to feed,  
That earth, one day, no more with war shall bleed,  
Nor brother's blood distain the ocean wave,  
Nor blazing forge make fetters for the slave ;  
Nor Afric mother, in her deep despair,  
Her bosom beat, her bleeding temples tear,  
And call upon her gods, in accents wild,  
To give her back her last and only child ;

But all beneath the sun's all-seeing eye,  
In peace serene and amity shall lie ;  
And o'er the earth, and through the ponderous deep,  
The courier wires in lengthening lines shall sweep,  
And link mankind in one harmonious whole,  
As nerves unite the body to the soul.

---

“ Away beneath the open sky,  
Down in the briny depths I lie,  
With sea-weeds for my pillow ;  
Around me great sea-monsters play,  
And o'er me soundeth night and day  
The seething, restless billow.

“ O'er crags I pass, and bluffs, and stones,  
And meet with dead men's mouldering bones,  
And piles of yellow gold ;

Extinct volcanoes, sunken wrecks,  
With splintered masts, and riven decks,  
And sharks within the hold.

“ And as I cross the deep ravine,  
Where sounding-line has never been,  
What fairy scenes arise !  
Scenes now to human vision sealed,  
But which, one day, by art revealed,  
Shall flash on mortal eyes.

“ And when the winds the ocean lash,  
I hear the angry billows dash,  
And break in thunder dread ;  
And men in ships go shouting past,  
Conflicting with the furious blast  
Above my tranquil head.


“ Anon I pass the lonely isle,  
And round the stormy Cape defile,  
Nor aught my course can stay,

Until I reach the landward pole  
That guides me to my destined goal,  
A thousand leagues away."

And there it lies, from coast to coast,  
The longest line the earth can boast,—  
The latest, noblest art  
Which wit of man has yet designed  
To bring together mind to mind,  
And thought to thought impart.

Across this highway in the deep  
The fleet electric heralds sweep  
In twinkling of an eye ;  
From where the morning sun ascends,  
To where in glory he descends,  
Beneath the western sky.

The statesman, merchant, lover, friend  
To earth's remotest bounds may send  
The urgent message on ;—





The key is struck ! the work is done !  
Round half the circuit of the sun  
Already has it gone !

And this is but a part we see  
Of what hereafter is to be,—  
When wires, as nerves, shall run  
From sea to sea, from pole to pole,  
And bind in one stupendous whole  
All nations 'neath the sun.

And when millennial times shall come,  
Oppression cease, and war be dumb,  
And earth from discord free ;  
Although men far apart may lie,  
The lightning-rod will bring them nigh,  
And they as one shall be.

For were there one continuous wire,  
The message sent on wings of fire,  
With easy usual pace,

Eight times, with speed of light, around  
The earth's enormous girth would bound  
    Within a moment's space.

As star-tubes bring the planets nigh,  
And ope the secrets of the sky  
    For human eyes to scan ;  
So thus by speed, space disappears,  
And moments do the work of years,  
    For dust-encumbered man.

Then o'er the land and seas below,  
Shall ceaseless note and message go,  
    And countless lines employ ;  
And thus shall throb, in every part,  
The universal human heart,  
    With mutual love and joy.

And earth shall be a transcript then,  
Of Paradise let down to men,  
    Where God shall deign to dwell ;

And nought beneath yon azure wall,  
Except the great Original,  
In glory shall excel.

## CANTO. VI.

*The power of unforeseen, despised, and little things, continued—Illustrative facts from sacred and profane history—A prominent feature in Divine Providence.*

HE who over all presides,  
Constant care on all bestows,  
Star alike and glowworm guides,  
Tends the chickweed as the rose ;

Hears the hungry orphan's cry,  
As when nations on Him call ;  
Sees alike the sparrow die,  
And the mighty empire fall.

Great and small, and far and near,  
Wide apart, our senses strike,  
Night and day unlike appear,  
But to Him they are alike.

Could we get behind the scenes,  
And have power to comprehend,  
Each would learn that fittest means  
Are appointed to each end.

But the glimpses that we get,  
Rightly understood, attest,  
Plan and purpose still are met  
By the means that suit them best.

---


I.

On every side, and reaching every state,  
The small oft triumphs o'er the seeming great :  
Now building up, and forthwith casting down,  
To lose or gain a battle or a crown ;

As if to humble pride and temper care,  
That man may not presume, and not despair.  
A hunted hare, which Cyrus deems his prey,  
A passing eagle swoops and bears away ;  
And one small swamp to Charles, the Swede, unknown,  
Decides Poltowa, and upsets his throne.  
Upon a river's banks two armies lie,  
Alike unwilling or to fight or fly,—  
A steed breaks loose, and neighing through the night,  
They rush to arms, and close in deadly fight.  
And one who passed through many a bloody strife,  
A molehill trips, and robs him of his life.

## II.

A giant falls beneath a stripling's sling,  
Philistia flies, and Judah's daughters sing.  
One, at a venture, draws his passive bow ;  
The arrow flies—a monarch is laid low :  
The battle stops—the war is at an end,—  
The great may thus upon the small depend.  
Hence to the swift the race may not belong,  
Nor wealth to worth, nor triumph to the strong.



## III.

The love, the courage, and the wit displayed,  
By one devoted, patriotic maid,  
Preserves a people to destruction doomed,  
And in the pit he dug the plotter is entombed.

## IV.

To Nile is brought a youthful Hebrew slave,  
Who millions saves from famine and the grave.


## V.

The basis of a nation's peace is laid  
By prattling of a little captive maid ;  
And she of Arc, in faith and virtue bold,  
Releases France from the invader's hold.  
In sooth, what ancient dynasty or throne,  
In frigid, torrid, or in temperate zone,  
But trembled in the balance, and inclined  
To right or left, as leaf before the wind,

By woman's tear, or fisherman's appeal,  
The incendiary's torch, or the assassin's steel,  
Or minstrel's song, or demagogue's tirade,  
The satire's edge, or point of pasquinade ?  
Thus trivial forces may the occasion prove,  
Of war or peace, of hatred or of love.

## VI.

But moral promptings from like means arise,  
Which sink to earth, or lift up to the skies.  
A sight, or sound, or book we chance to read,  
May give the bent which in the end may lead  
To patriot's grave, or to the felon's doom,  
The martyr's stake, or to the drunkard's tomb.  
And thus, as match to mine, or added sack,  
Which sinks the boat, or breaks the camel's back,  
The slender mean, the last condition moves,  
Which being moved at once decisive proves.  
The day of small things let not man despise,  
The little cloud may soon o'erspread the skies ;





From out the bleeding block or burning stake,  
A power may rise that shall an empire shake.

## VII.

His way it is on whom all forces wait,  
From out the little to evoke the great.  
He calls his workmen, and the worm appears !  
His hosts for vengeance, and the locust hears !  
Not snakes and crocodiles, but frogs and flies,  
And mean and loathsome things, which men despise ;  
By these, and such as these, Jehovah bowed  
The necks of tyrants, and abased the proud.  
By feeble hands the banner was unfurled,  
Which offers pardon to a guilty world ;  
That all may plainly see, and grateful own,  
The work of grace is God's, and His alone.  
And by such means His ends He still achieves,  
His foes corrects, and injured friends relieves.

## VIII.

As if to let proud man his weakness see,  
He makes a grub do greater things than he.

The little earthworm by unceasing toil,  
Divides, refines, and fructifies the soil,  
And plays a leading part in nature's plan—  
To spread the board for bird and beast and man.  
The small soft coral-worm its work performs  
Amidst the tumult of unceasing storms,  
And draws an increase of that subtle loam  
With which it builds, from out the breaker's foam.  
And working on through lapse of countless years,  
A mighty island in the end appears  
Above the waves ; and nature carries on  
The work begun, and spreads her mould upon  
That worm-created world, embossed and vast,  
Until 'tis fit for man's abode at last.  
Away it stretches out a thousand miles,  
Repels the deep, and rich with verdure smiles.  
A work ! compared with which the works of man  
Together massed, since time its course began—  
Egyptian pyramid and Chinese wall,  
Mounds, temples, towers, and stately capital—  
Lose all their boasted magnitude and pride,  
And seem but molehills on a mountain's side.

## IX.

Thus, too, another work, and greater far,  
Is building up amidst incessant war.  
And as the coral-worm its dwelling forms  
From yeast of billows lashed by savage storms,  
So here, a living power in secret lurks,  
And 'midst the war of human passions works,  
And draws from thence the elements of grace,  
And straightway sets them in their proper place,  
Until at length the finished work shall rise,  
To gladden earth and greet the smiling skies.

## X.

Why, then, is earth, as is the sky with clouds,  
O'errun with hopes enveloped in their shrouds,—  
A motley band, persistent, grim, and gaunt,  
That, ghost-like, still their former dwellings haunt?  
Why?—Ignorance and self-delusion lead  
To spurious hopes which disappointment breed ;  
And Reason, bribed, a biassed weapon wields,  
And fond Desire her ready credence yields ;

And Hope, all buoyant and obsequious, springs,  
And spreads at slightest hint her willing wings ;  
And careful Prudence, purblind at the best,  
By rival ends and counter means opprest ;  
And outward elements beyond control,  
And evil passions warring in the soul ;  
And Death and pale Disease, which strike by stealth  
The seat of life and springs of thought and health ;—  
These, and the things which men as nought despise,  
Upset the schemes which wisdom may devise.  
And then, o'er all the great Supreme presides,  
Each wheel directs, each secret pinion guides,  
And brings about, with never-failing skill,  
The sure conclusions of His sovereign will.  
Hence burdened earth with ruined hopes is piled,  
And man is writ misfortune's hapless child.

## XI.

Yet though betimes the unlikely may prevail,  
And caution, skill, and diligence may fail,  
These are the means which oftenest succeed,—  
Else to be wise were foolishness indeed.

Let hope nor fear the mind unduly stir ;  
For what is hoped or feared may ne'er occur.  
Yet strive not Hope or Fancy to suppress,  
But only watch they run not to excess ;  
For these are they which touch the inner springs,  
And lure mankind to seek for higher things.  
Were Hope removed, Despair would take her place,  
And self-destruction thin the human race ;  
Did Fancy die—the Raphael of the mind—  
'Twould leave a gap and sunless void behind.  
Take matters as they stand—the peace, the strife,  
The light, the shade, the good and ill of life,  
And do what seems, upon the whole, the best—  
And, trustful, leave to Providence the rest.

---

Wouldst thou mature thy mind and frame,  
Ignoble sloth deride ;  
Refuse a parasite to be,  
And in thyself confide.

'Tis only when there's nothing left  
To cling around, we see  
The ivy, self-reliant, grow,  
And form into a tree.

And still, with modest loving heart,  
Thy life of labour live,  
And thou wilt get the best return  
Thy nature has to give.  
Deem not the crosses you sustain  
Are fitted or designed  
To give you pain and nothing more,  
And leave no good behind.

Where shall we find the mariner  
Adroit and prompt and brave ?  
Seek not for him in peaceful seas,  
But where the tempests rave !  
'Tis not in silken scenes of peace  
The hardy warrior's trained ;  
'Tis not in halls of studious ease  
The statesman's skill is gained.

The brunt, the blast, the conflict sharp,  
The peril, the defeat,  
Must join their wholesome discipline  
To make the man complete.  
The strong of arm, the swift of foot,  
The masculine in mind,  
Are not the fruit of idleness,  
But toil with care combined.

The quarry holds its marble fast,  
The earth its gems and gold,  
Till wedge and crow, and pick and spade,  
Their various wealth unfold.  
And trees that front or flank the wood  
Are not the first, but last,  
To lose their foothold of the earth,  
And sink before the blast.

## CANTO VII.

*The soothing effect of time on blighted hopes—The bereaved mother—The divine purpose to bring good out of evil—God's faithfulness to His promises.*

LESS and less, as it recedes,  
Grows a world of ponderous size,  
Till, as on and on it speeds,  
Hangs it in the midnight skies,  
A little twinkling star,—  
Small as is the little eye  
That lifts its little disc on high,  
And gazes on it from afar.

Thus, in time as 'tis in space,  
(Acting on the inward sight,)  
Distance, stretching out apace,  
Dwarfs the mighty, dims the bright,—



Bright and great no more !  
Best of all,—it brings relief,  
Soothes misfortune, lessens grief,  
And salves the aching sore.'

---

## I.

As distance mellows down the rugged scene,  
And nature covers o'er with mantling green  
The ruin old, so time's unceasing flow  
In seeming distance sets the scenes of woe,  
And spreads upon them an ethereal blue,  
Which hides their native harshness from the view,  
Until at last, as landscape in the stream,  
A pleasing picture of the past they seem ;  
But joy by distance loses not, but gains—  
Time drops the bitter, and the sweet retains.

## II.

The youthful matron, with a mother's joy,  
Her first-born hails,—a little darling boy !

To meet his wants she tends him day and night,  
Nor feels the toil, for love makes labour light.  
He lives to lisp a mother's name, and talk  
In mutilated accents, and to walk  
From chair to chair, and then with twittering feet,  
To rush with lusty shouts across the street.  
His words and ways within her heart are stored,  
And e'en his faults, though challenged, are adored.  
A tear procures what prudence would deny,  
And in one kiss a thousand pardons lie.

## III.

Anticipation opens to the view !—  
A bright perspective !—bright, but ah, untrue !  
As when eclipse the dubious dawn recalls,  
Upon his rosy morn a shadow falls.  
It passes not away, but deepens still,  
And anxious fears the mother's bosom fill.  
He droops and pines, and one asserts " he dies !"  
" He must not die !"—in frenzied grief she cries.  
" I will not die, mamma !—Why should I die ?  
God will be angry with you if you cry."

And down he kneels, beside his little chair,  
And says to God his little evening prayer.  
The prayer is mingled with a mother's tears,  
And hope revives, and dissipates her fears.

## IV.

But Death unmoved, without or let or pause,  
Still near and nearer to his victim draws.  
He sinks apace, and murmurs in his dreams  
Of angel's wings, and ever-flowing streams,  
And calls upon his mother not to stay,  
But come with him to yon bright world away.

## V.

Upon her knee, and leaning on her breast,  
He looks his last fond look, and sinks to rest.  
She draws him to her in a close embrace,  
And fatuous gazes on his placid face,  
And calls on God, in her distraction wild,  
To take her too, or give her back her child.

## VI.

But time goes by, and in its gentle flow  
It dries the tears, and smooths the brow of woe ;  
And hope returns, and gives the heart relief,  
And pensive sadness takes the place of grief.  
Her darling child amid the angel throngs,  
Has caught the beauty which to them belongs ;  
And he will ne'er grow old, but ever be  
The little boy that died upon her knee.

## VII.

Thus days and years the scars of grief efface,  
As echo mellows sound, and distance space.  
Hail holy law, beneficent and kind !—  
A law to matter, as it is to mind.  
If distance lessened not, sound, light, nor size,  
The sun when up, would fill the crowded skies ;  
And half the inky dome of silent night,  
The moon would cover, while she gave her light :  
And speech and music would be heard no more,  
But one terrific and unceasing roar :

And farthest stars with undiminished ray,  
Would shed abroad intolerable day,  
And all combined would set the whole on fire,  
And in one blaze creation would expire.

## VIII.

God's works and ways His power and wisdom prove,  
But still more clearly His unbounded love.  
Though all our woes are treason's bastard brood,  
He strives to turn them to our lasting good ;  
For love has opened up a royal road,  
By which the guilty may return to God :  
And hence He aims by blasted hopes to show,  
How vain the trust that rests on things below,  
And thereby lead the disappointed mind,  
Its sure resources in Himself to find.

## IX.

And so from evil He educeth good,  
And turneth poison into wholesome food ;  
And out of ruins rears that work sublime,  
Which shall survive the ravages of time.

What perfect wisdom and what love are here !—  
Yet man to neither gives attentive ear.  
And even those whose eyes have been unsealed,  
And in whose heart the truth has been revealed,  
Amidst their pains and ruined prospects fail  
To climb those heights which faith is meant to scale,  
And see afar the bright and blissful end,  
To which, by pledge divine, those trials tend :—  
For faith is weak, and human heart is faint,  
And rash impatience breaks into complaint,  
Not only in the sinner, but the saint.

## X.

Thus promise is from Providence disjoined,  
And sight, not faith, controls the subject mind :  
Not ends, but means—a part, and not the whole,  
Divorced are laid before the troubled soul ;  
And that kind hand is for the time forgot,  
Which mingles crosses in His people's lot,  
And sends the darkness ere it gives the day,  
Wounds ere it heals, and giving takes away

Their hearts from earth to wean and purify,  
And draw them up, and fit them for the sky.

## XI.

The end o'erlooked, the means are misconstrued,  
Good reckoned ill, and ill esteemed as good.  
His purpose is, to make them see and feel  
Their need of Him, and needing, to appeal  
With oft and earnest pleadings at His throne,  
And place their confidence in Him alone,  
And better learn His priceless gifts to prize,  
And evermore to higher grace to rise.

## XII.

And can it be forgot what He has done,  
Who gave up all, in giving of His Son ;  
Who oped the treasures of His matchless grace,  
And poured down heaven on a rebel race ;  
Whose word is pledged that He will never leave  
The sons of men who in His Son believe,  
But make all things commingle for their good,  
Seen or unseen, unknown or understood ?

And can He,—has He ever failed to be  
True to His word ?—search diligently and see !—  
Ask of the men who lived before the Flood,  
And question Noah if His threatenings stood ;  
Adjure the patriarchs and bid them say,  
If God did e'er belie them, or betray ;  
Let Moses speak, and Joshua witness here,  
And let the prophets choir on choir appear ;  
And call on saints, and on apostles call,  
And charge them to give answer one and all ;  
Bid nature say, and bid the angels tell,  
And summon up the evidence of hell !—  
With one accord, above, around, below,  
Time and eternity will answer, No !

---

The forests have their depths  
Where silence broods ;  
And mountains, moors, and wastes  
Their solitudes.



The naked lonely sea  
Has depths profound,  
And earth her secrets hides  
Deep under ground :  
Depths in the sea, in earth, and air,  
And mystery brooding everywhere.

The firmament has depths,  
Whose secrets lie  
Beyond the range or reach  
Of tube or eye ;  
And Nature everywhere,  
Or near or far,  
Her inner secrets veils,  
From leaf to star :  
O'er each a curtain thick is cast,  
And each its counsels holdeth fast.

And Providence and time  
Have secrets deep,  
Which till the hour shall strike,  
Will silence keep.

All life, and mind, and thought,  
Their means and ends,  
One Mind alone creates  
And comprehends.  
Man little knows ; that little he  
Knows at the best imperfectly.

But if Thy works and ways  
Our thoughts transcend,  
All vainly shall we strive  
To comprehend  
Thyself ! thou depth of depths !  
Eternal One !  
Whose works are not the end,  
But God begun !  
Thy boundless Self, unlesseened lies,  
Above these world-emblazoned skies !  
Shall man then cast the measuring-line  
O'er what is endless and divine ?

## CANTO VIII.

*Heaven and the triumphs of Hope—The suicide prevented—The backslider reclaimed—The doubter undeceived.*

BEHOLD the cross of Calvary !—

Nearly hath the ninth hour run ;  
Round it rages bigotry,


O'er it hangs the darkened sun.  
In it, Justice sheathes its sword ;  
By it, God fulfils His word ;  
From it, to a fallen world,  
Mercy's banner is unfurled.

Ends the hour, and rives the vail ;  
Rend the rocks, and stir the dead ;  
People, priests, and soldiers quail—  
Bruisèd falls the serpent's head.

Power his red right hand's forsaken,  
From his grasp the keys are taken ;  
Fettered to his chariot-wheels,  
Hangs he at the victor's heels.

Spring the prison-bolts away,  
Hear the deaf, and speak the dumb ;  
Inward rush the floods of day,  
Out the joyous captives come :  
Death hath hid his haggard face,  
Now's the hour and power of grace ;  
Day hath searched destruction's gloom,  
Open stands the empty tomb.

Night comes down on Calvary,  
Silence rests on wall and hill ;  
Yonder stands the vacant tree,  
Streaked with blood that trickles still.  
Bar of hell, and key of heaven,  
Sinai's bolts were through thee driven,—  
One hath died for man's offence,  
Guilt is saved by innocence.



Now, instead of wailings deep,  
Songs of grace our tongues employ ;  
Fiends kept watch where angels keep,  
Terror dwelt where dwelleth joy.  
Worms and fire !—for these are given,  
Peace from God, and light from heaven ;  
Dark remorse and grim despair,  
Homeward to their haunts repair.

Where's the line confusion flung,  
Where the stones that empty fell,  
Where the thunder-cloud that hung  
O'er Zion's towers and Kedron's dell ?—  
Down again the ladder's let,  
Firm on earth its feet are set ;  
See the gates of glory rending,  
See the hosts of God descending !

Angels stir Bethesda's pool,  
Bruisèd reeds their blemish lose ;  
Now the widow's barrel's full,  
Fills with oil her empty cruse ;

Joy of her declining years,  
Back from death her son appears ;  
Where the glistening serpent lay,  
Streams are singing on their way.

Bring the wedding garments forth,  
Let the hall with songs resound,  
Be each heart the home of mirth—  
Earth was lost, and now is found !  
Hope has triumphed o'er despair ;  
Stands she by the cross, and there  
Holds she out at Christ's command,  
Passports to the promised land,  
Free to faith, and sure and good,  
Signed and sealed with Shiloh's blood ;—  
Other hopes uncertain prove,  
These, nor earth nor hell can move.  
Steadfast as Jehovah's throne,  
These will stand, and these alone !  
Glory, glory to the Lord,  
Grace has sheathed th' avenger's sword ;

Gone are clouds and shadows dim,  
Gone are flaming cherubim ;  
Eden's gates are open flung,  
Free to every tribe and tongue ;  
Cry aloud with one accord,  
" Glory, glory to the Lord !"

---

## I.

Beneath the bright and all-embracing sky,  
Our ruined hopes as heaps of refuse lie ;  
For each returning morn its myriads breeds,  
And myriads die, ere night to day succeeds,—  
A waste of spectral things, in number more  
Than are the sands upon the sea-beat shore.  
Could these, embodied, and in mass, arise,  
The night at noon would overspread the skies ;  
And earth, encumbered, on its way would roll,  
With ruins piled from pole to further pole,—

A Babel huge, of phantom follies built,  
Revealing man's presumption and his guilt.  
Ah ! what a sight, as onward it should sweep,  
For fiends to laugh at and the angels weep !

But there are hopes which not in ruins lie,  
Secure as pillars which support the sky ;  
For He has said, whose promise cannot fail,  
That death nor hell shall over them prevail.  
All other hopes like leaves of autumn fade,  
And, falling down, the sport of winds are made.

## II.

Ascend to yonder sphere where angels dwell,  
And then descend into the depths of hell !  
And learn of different hopes the final fate,  
Which all must learn, but most shall learn too late.  
Behold ! and ponder well, in hope or fear,  
The ruins yonder, and the triumphs here !  
What tongue shall try these issues to rehearse ?  
Can minds of babes contain the universe ?  
And what they cannot know can they portray ?—  
When ages are compressed into a day,



And ocean thrust into an empty shell,  
Then may a mortal tongue these issues tell.

But what we cannot tell, and not conceive,  
More precious knowledge can the mind receive ;  
The knowledge which conducts to that sweet rest,  
Where hope reposes on fruition's breast.

## III.

Hast wings of faith ? then upward let us soar,  
Until the light of nature's seen no more !

How throbs the heart with a mysterious awe,  
As near and nearer to that world we draw,  
A world illumed with uncreated rays,  
On which the eye uncovered cannot gaze ;  
What wonder he of Tarsus has averred,  
He could not tell what he had seen and heard ;  
For things of earth, the brightest and the best,  
But dimly type those regions of the blest.

Hast seen a cloud upon the mountain's breast,  
On which the shades of night still lingering rest ?  
How cold it looks, how rugged, and how dun !  
But up it mounts, and meets the rising sun,—

Transfigured in his beams it floats away,  
A thing of beauty in the morning's ray.  
How faintly does the contrast shadow forth  
The things above, compared with those of earth !  
Yet if we would some slight presentment show  
Of heavenly things, we must to nature go ;  
As he of Patmos in his book has done,  
Who takes the glory of the mid-day sun,  
And all things great and fair in earth and sky,  
To symbolise the fairer things on high.

## IV.

Here let us rest awhile, until the sight  
Retrieves its strength from that excess of light.  
'Tis plain that these are but refracted rays,  
On which we, dazzled but delighted, gaze ;  
And this, a precinct only of the realm,  
Whose inner glory would our powers o'erwhelm.  
Hear'st thou a rush of myriad wings combined,  
As 'twere a forest shaken of the wind—  
And far-off cadences that pulsing fall,  
As when earth's echoes on each other call ?

Perchance, ere long, in these outlying plains,  
Where still, though dimmed, celestial beauty reigns,  
Some of the blest may come,—nay, now I see  
That numbers are where no one seemed to be.  
Beneath yon bower, in raiment white as snow,  
I see two men, as if for converse, go.  
On silent pinion thither let us speed,  
Hang o'er the place, and to their words give heed.

## v.

“I deemed,” says one, “that all things would be right,  
If wealth were mine, and strove both day and night  
To gather wealth, and wealth to me inclined,—  
Yet brought not with it what I hoped to find,  
But took away my former joy and peace,  
And yet increased my wish, my riches to increase ;  
And riches grew, until my ponderous wealth  
Weighed down my strength, and undermined my  
health.


A revolution came, and in a day  
It swept my hoarded treasures clean away.

I gnashed my teeth, and clenched my hands, and then  
I challenged God, and cursed my fellow-men,  
And lifted up the suicidal knife  
To end at once my torment and my life.

“I knew not then what held my desperate hand,  
But like to Abraham at God’s command,  
I dropt the knife, and stood as in a trance,  
Until a beggar boy, as if by chance,  
Sang out, beside my door, the simple lay,  
‘There is a happy land, far, far away!’

“I felt as I had never felt before—  
My limbs shook under me, my tears ran o’er :  
I fell upon my knees in act of prayer ;  
But pray I could not—yet did not despair.  
My thoughts like lightning-shafts shot through my brain,  
Now yielding comfort, now inflicting pain.  
The fires of hell flashed up before my eyes,  
Whilst far-off glory streamed along the skies,  
And ever and anon returned the lay,  
‘There is a happy land, far, far away!’

“I struggled hard and long to get release,  
But months elapsed ere I arrived at peace.



If ever God did sinful wretch conduct !  
If ever brand was from the burning pluckt !——”

## VI.

“Stay ! hear my case !—my case was worse than  
thine !”

“It could not be !—none could be worse than mine !”

“But hear me first, and then you shall decide.

From earliest years my parents strove to guide

My faltering steps into the rightful way.

They bowed my knee, and taught me how to pray,

And stored my opening mind with Scripture truth,

And built a fence of prayer around my youth.

“I heard them thanking God for taking me,

As Samuel was of old, His child to be ;

And I believed them, and was filled with pride,

And strove the more my secret faults to hide.

“I went into the world, and met with those

Who were of God and truth the open foes.

Shocked at their words, I ventured to rebuke—

They held me up to ridicule, and shook

My slender faith, and put into my hands  
A book which snapped asunder all the bands  
Which bound me to the truth ; and by-and-by  
I joined them in their jeers and revelry.

“ If conscience smote, the louder I profaned,  
And talked and boasted of my freedom gained,  
And deeper drank to drown the dreaded past,  
And keep compunction down, until at last,  
A bloated wreck, I walked along the street,  
And those who ruined shunned with me to meet.  
Like hungry wolves within my bosom raved  
The evil passions which had me enslaved.

“ And last and worst—oh ! black and hideous  
shame !—

Though self-destroyed, I flung on God the blame,  
And wished 'twere in my power against His head  
To hurl the universe, and strike Him dead.  
If e'er a heart into a hell was turned,  
That hell for months within my bosom burned ;  
And still with oaths I fed the blazing pyre.”

“ What were the means which drew you from the  
fire ? ”

“A living voice was sent by God to thee—  
But from the grave the dead spake back to me ;  
My mother’s prayers she was wont to pray  
Came back and spoke, and would not go away.  
And one in chief, kept sounding in my head—

“‘If e’er he should, by ill example led,  
From his Redeemer and from Thee depart,  
As with a live coal touch his wandering heart,  
And bring him back, and in contrition meet  
Replace him, Father, at his Saviour’s feet.’

“That prayer haunted me by night and day—  
Do what I might, it would not go away.  
I railed, blasphemed, but still to me it clung,  
And forced its way from my unwilling tongue.  
I questioned it, and asked it whence and why  
It spake to me ; but it made no reply,  
Save by repeating of itself, until  
A voice within me seemed to say, ‘Be still !’  
And it was so, or what was so to me ;  
For though the waves still plunged, the oil was on  
the sea.

And soon I reached the peaceful happy shore

Where fires and tempests blazed and raged no more.

Said I not well my case was worse than thine ? ”

“ Worse it might be, but not so bad as mine, ”

Said one who had approached them unobserved.

“ ’Tis true from virtue’s paths you wider swerved ;

But my declension was of deeper dye.

I turned the truth of God into a lie,

And formed and set an idol in His place,

And incense burned to works and not to grace.

And even after grace had found me out,

I oft gave way to questionings and doubt.

And when, upon my deathbed, friends drew near,

And strove by word and act my soul to cheer,

I died, by dread forebodings racked and tost,

Believing in my heart that all was lost.

So deep was this belief, that when I woke,

And when these glories on my vision broke,

‘ Who can, ’ I cried, ‘ amidst these burnings dwell ? ’

For I believed they were the flames of hell.

Was ever soul so hardly saved as mine ?

Did ever grace with brighter lustre shine ? ”

---



As on a mountain-side I lay,  
The sun went down with golden ray,  
    And lacquered tower and tree ;  
And clouds, as if of life possest,  
Came thronging round his flaming crest,  
Like floating islands of the blest  
    Upon an amber sea.

The gorgeous pageant passed away.  
But still enwrapt in thought I lay  
    Till sleep my eyelids sealed.  
And, freed from Reason's stern control,  
The reins capricious Fancy stole,  
And straightway to my passive soul  
    Her picture-world revealed.

From out her magic chambers thrown  
I saw, outstretched from zone to zone,  
    Athwart an ocean wide,  
A bridge of rainbows bright and fair,  
Each arch a league and more, and there  
It hung, self-balanced, in the air,  
    Majestic in its pride.

Enraptured at the glorious sight,  
Methought (for visions of the night,  
Howe'er grotesque they be,  
A full and instant credence find)  
What mighty hand these spans combined,  
And for what end is it designed,  
That bridge across the sea?

Is some sea-pageant drawing near?  
Or will a syren band appear  
With songs and dulcet chimes?  
Or troops of shining angels pass,  
With folded wings, in lengthening mass,  
Across that bridge of liquid glass,  
Away to other climes?

Or is it but a transcript given  
Of one which leaves the gates of heaven  
For some adjacent sky?  
Or is it meant a type to be  
Of earth enfranchised, pure, and free,  
When all the isles from sea to sea  
In love and peace shall lie?

While thus I mused, there came in sight  
A vast procession clothed in white,  
    Less earthly than divine ;  
And as they near and nearer drew,  
They brighter still and brighter grew,  
Until I saw, their thin forms through,  
    The blue of heaven shine.

A halt was made along the march,  
And, standing there, each crowded arch  
    Was edged around with white.  
Above, looked down the blue serene—  
Below, outspread the ocean green—  
And upward rose the bridge between,  
    With brilliant hues bedight.

Anon a pale horse came in view,  
Whose rider grim a trumpet blew,  
    And, lo! the bridge upsprung  
In silence and in mystery,  
As when is raised a drawbridge high,  
And there, aslant from sea to sky,  
    A ladder steep it hung.

And now the rider and his horse  
Went rushing up that headlong course  
    Swift as the eagle flies ;  
And as from arch to arch it sprung,  
Heaps tossed on heaps he downward flung,  
And few I saw, or old or young,  
    Passed up into the skies.

Down came the rider and his steed,  
With such abrupt and frantic speed,  
    As made the air to gleam.  
He blew a blast, whose sudden stroke,  
Like battle-axe, my slumber broke ;  
And, grieved and startled, I awoke,—  
    And, lo ! it was a dream.

## CANTO IX.

*Heaven continued—The martyr—The persecutor—  
Children—Story of a child—Multitude of children  
—Their different conditions on earth—Unexplored  
wonders of heaven.*

Go spirits five throughout the earth,  
And search from east to west,  
And find the thing of greatest worth  
By mortal man possess,  
That we a touchstone may acquire,  
To test the things which men desire.

Away like shooting-stars they went,  
Each on his different way,  
And was so on his errand bent,  
He rested night nor day,  
But watched with sleepless anxious eye,  
The ways of men both low and high.

Two moons had waxed and waned again,  
Ere one returned to say,  
That after careful search 'twas plain,  
In gold the chief good lay ;  
For they—and all the fact confest—  
Were envied most, who most possest.

Another came, and said that fame  
Above all else was best,  
For death annulled the rich man's claim,  
Not his who fame possest ;  
And surely that which death withstood,  
Was rightly deemed the chiefest good.

A third arrived, and he maintained  
A throne was best of things ;  
For wealth, and power, and honour reigned  
In courts and camps of kings,  
And rank and genius bowed the knee,  
And homage paid to royalty.

A spirit fourth in order came,  
And thus his mind exprest :  
Not thrones, nor gold, nor barren fame,  
But pleasure is the best ;  
For pleasure, soul, and sense excites—  
The rest, nor sense nor soul delights.

Another moon had passed away,  
Ere the last spirit came.  
He heard what each had got to say,  
And each began to blame,—  
For they had not, so he opined,  
Searched deep enough the truth to find.

“I, too,” he said, “myself deceived,  
And judged by ear and eye ;  
But, diving deeper, I perceived  
The outward told a lie.  
The inner only baffles art,  
And tells the truth to every heart.

“ For what are pleasure, wealth, and fame,  
Unless they joy impart ?  
That good is but an empty name,  
Which leaves an aching heart !  
Does sickness joy in dainties find,  
Or splendour soothe the troubled mind ? ”

*Inference.*

No matter that the best be found  
In workshop, field, or ditch,  
The man whose heart-joys most abound,  
Is richest of the rich.  
That worthless is, however bright,  
Which fails to give unfeigned delight.  
From out a long and brilliant reign,  
An Arab prince who ruled o'er Spain,  
On casting back his earnest gaze,  
Could only count two happy days :  
And Louis thirteenth of the name,  
Not even one such day could claim :  
And Saladin, that all might see,  
What short-lived baubles sceptres be,



Ordained that on his burial day,  
No idle pomp should lead the way,  
But one with lance should go before,  
And hold aloft the shirt he wore.  
Enjoyment then becomes the test  
Of what is really, truly best,  
Provided it is not combined  
With that which leaves a sting behind.  
All else is but a jarring sound,  
Whate'er it is, wherever found.  
And by this test we find that he  
Is most from inward troubles free,  
And most enjoys the things of this,  
Who seeks a world of after-bliss.

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I.

There was a pause, with earnest thought combined,  
As if each sought to settle in his mind  
On whom the richest grace had been bestowed,  
That gave him entrance to that blest abode.

At length one gravely rose and silence broke,  
And briefly thus in serious accents spoke :  
“ ’Tis well that each should so adjudge his case,  
As to consign it to the highest place,—  
The crowning trophy of triumphant grace.  
Our grateful hallelujahs let us raise,  
And sound abroad the great Redeemer’s praise.”

## II.

Attracted by the song, another came,  
Whose spirit passed through fagot and through flame  
When earth was left behind, for at the stake  
He died, a martyr for the Master’s sake.  
As heretic accursed he burned and died,  
“ Too vile to live ! ” his persecutors cried.

The anthem swelled amain, and louder rung,  
By added volume of the martyr’s tongue ;  
And, strange to tell, they had not ceased their song,  
When Saul of Tarsus stood amidst the throng.  
“ Let louder anthems yet arise,” he cried,  
“ For one—the worst for whom the Saviour died—

A persecutor vile ! whose bigot zeal  
Was blind to mercy, deaf to all appeal.  
Unmoved alike by sex, or age, or youth,  
I breathed out slaughter 'gainst the friends of truth,  
And stood beside, and with my utmost breath  
Urged on the men who Stephen stoned to death.  
And shouted out, as by their clothes I stood,  
When I beheld the martyr's streaming blood."

A pause ensued, as if by horror held,  
And then their loud hosannas rolled and swelled ;  
But far above, and loudest of them all,  
Arose the voice of the exulting Paul.

## III.

And other spirits came, and paused awhile,  
Whilst others passed with sweet seraphic smile ;  
And each to each related by the way  
How he had reached those realms of endless day.  
We hoped that haply some ones might draw near  
Whose hallowed names in sacred writ appear—  
Some holy one who in God's presence stood,  
Or walked and talked with Him before the Flood—

Or one of those, the impious or obscene,  
Whom grace arrested, pardoned, and made clean ;  
But none appeared. Meanwhile came mingling choirs  
Of children's spirits, chanting to their lyres  
O'er one they gently led by either hand,  
Who newly had arrived and joined their happy band.

## IV.

A jubilate sounded, loud and high,  
As to that bower the joyful troop drew nigh ;  
And then each wing was folded, and each ear  
Was to the stranger turned, his tale to hear.  
He needed not entreaty to unfold  
His simple past, and thus his tale he told ;  
For all in heaven swift perfection reach  
In reasoning power, in knowledge, and in speech :—

## V.

“I was a babe in arms, a sickly child,  
And nursed and fondled by a mother mild,  
Who sang to me of One in heaven here,  
To whom, she said, His little ones were dear.

And sweetly pensive were the strains she sung ;  
And as she sang I closer to her clung,  
And held her round the neck, and kissed her cheek ;  
And she would smile, and softly to me speak,  
And drop a pearly tear upon my face,  
And wrap me fondly in her warm embrace.

“ She pined away ; and as she drooped, I pined.  
‘ And must I leave my little one behind ?’  
She often said, and wept. ‘ If so, ’tis well !  
But God may take him with me—who can tell ?’

“ She died. Whilst dying, in her arms I lay ;  
And soon thereafter I was called away.  
What was my joy when I beheld again  
My mother dear come forth with angels twain,  
Their faces radiant and their wings unfurled,  
To bid me welcome to the spirit-world ?  
And up we came, and chanted as we flew ;  
And when anear to heaven’s gates we drew,  
The gates flew up, and rushing wings came forth,  
To hail our coming from the distant earth,  
And in we went, and as we went we sung,  
And all around the arch of heaven rung

With hallelujahs to Immanuel's grace,  
Until we reached, and saw Him face to face;  
And many like myself around Him stood,  
Arrived that moment, ransomed by His blood.  
O what a look he gave us, as He said,—  
'For joys like this I suffered and I bled,  
And ever more and more, as ages roll,  
I see with joy the travail of my soul.'  
Scarce had the teller told his simple tale,  
When all cried out—

'Hail ! King of glory, hail !

On Thee were all our sins and sorrows laid,  
To Thee the honour and the thanks be paid !' "

VI.

The worship ceased, and one stood forth and said :  
"Since I came here, an hundred years have fled,  
As men count time,—and yet these hundred years,  
Amidst this perfect bliss, like one appears;  
For not to years, but joy and pain, belong,  
The power to shorten time, or to prolong.

Within that space, what myriads have come here,  
Of babes and children, to their Saviour dear !  
He loved them while on earth, He loves them still,  
And slowly, but for them, would heaven fill ;  
For not as yet have ages given birth  
To that blest time when He shall reign on earth.  
But slightly various was the slender span  
Of life, which ended ere it scarce began  
With these, His innocents, from whom I got  
The simple annals of their earthly lot.  
To most, or nearly all, 'twas only given  
To enter life, and passport get for heaven ;  
But some, indeed, in their short stay below,  
Were made to taste of cruelty and woe.  
One never knew a mother's watchful care,  
Another, curses heard instead of prayer ;  
And one was born and died upon the sea,  
And one first saw the light beneath a tree ;  
Some naked lay, and some in rags were drest,  
And others sucked a drunken mother's breast ;  
And many else were strangled in the birth,  
And hid by night beneath the secret earth ;

And some by fire, and some by poison, died,  
And others perished whilst for food they cried ;  
And some, with stones about their necks, were cast  
Into the midnight pool to breathe their last :  
But neither want nor outrage could destroy  
Their right, through Christ, these regions to enjoy ;  
Nor any wrest them, or by sea or land,  
From out His own, or from His Father's hand.  
What recks it now the wrongs and pains they bore,  
Since all in Him are one for evermore ?  
Come, children, then, let one loud strain arise  
To Him who bled, to raise you to the skies !"  
Up rose the prompt, enthusiastic song,  
And peal on peal re-echoed loud and long ;  
And all around the region answer gave,  
As strings harmonic answer wave to wave.

## VII.

Away in different groups they joyful stray,  
And angels meet and join them by the way ;  
And others to and fro in clusters come,  
Some close at hand, and in the distance some—



With here and there a spirit far apart,  
In earnest converse with his grateful heart.  
With various curve, at diverse speed they go,  
Some swift as wind, and some as water slow ;  
And ever and again there shooteth by,  
Far over head, like meteor of the sky,  
A shining one, as if on message sent  
To some far corner of the firmament.  
He leaves behind him, in his rapid flight,  
A long-extending line of quivering light.

## VIII.

If in that distant and sequestered scene  
Such bliss appears, such majesty serene,  
What must it be where pours the central light  
In cloudless zenith on the raptured sight ;  
Where myriads round the primal glory throng,  
And strike the harp, and raise the joyful song,  
And feel alike within their spirits glow  
The love of Him from whom their blessings flow,  
Whose sundry crowns with varied beams may shine,  
But lost in mutual love, and love divine,

The mingling tints in whirling surges tost,  
White as their robes, in one pure white are lost  
But mortal eye may not these scenes behold,  
Nor mind conceive, nor human tongue unfold.  
By sin, and pride, and ignorance beguiled,  
Each thinks and reasons as a little child ;  
But each, as he attains those realms of day,  
These crude and childish thoughts will put away.

Who then may tell the wonders of that place ?  
Or who recount the marvels done by grace ?  
Before the endless tale were well begun,  
The sun his circuit to the west had run.  
Yet if we would of things above conceive,  
We must from things below the means receive ;—  
Still, after all, when man his best has done,  
'Tis but a rushlight to the mid-day sun ;  
And all the outer glory we portray  
Can only dimly to the mind convey  
The inner glory which the spirit thrills,  
And all its powers with bliss and beauty fills.

## IX.

Thrice happy land, to hope and promise true,  
How blest are they who have thy rest in view !  
Unlike those hopes which have respect to earth,  
Which fade and perish in their place of birth.  
Beneath that ample and resplendent dome  
The Christian's hopes have found a lasting home.  
Hopes which on earth were shunned and disesteemed,  
And were as visions of the mystic deemed ;  
And yet those hopes, though bright beyond compare,  
And thick as sunbeams in the summer air,  
A thousand-fold have met fulfilment there.

---

“ Be still ! ” He said, as o'er the side  
Of heaven's battlements the tide  
Of insurrection flows.  
The jarring sounds of chaos cease,  
When that omnific voice cried “ Peace ! ”  
And heaven and earth arose.

And once again it interposed,  
As Eden's flaming portals closed,  
And forth, forlorn and sad,  
The fallen pair, in blank dismay,  
Went out into the world's highway,  
With shame and sorrow clad.

As rolled the tide of time along,  
The burden of each prophet's song  
Was still, "Prepare the way!"  
He came, but not as men prevised,  
A man of sorrows and despised,  
To want and woe a prey.

He speaks ! the weak are filled with might,  
The lame arise, the blind have sight,  
And maniacs cease to rave :  
And demons trembling disappear,  
And corpses rise from couch and bier,  
And quit the loathsome grave.

A boat is on the stormy deep,  
The rowers cry to one asleep,  
Himself and them to save.  
He rises up, and says, "Be still!"  
The raging wind obeys His will,  
And sinks the stormy wave.

The Prince of Peace is on the cross,  
His foes their arms in triumph toss,  
And hail His parting breath.  
But whilst the shout and taunt arise,  
"Be still!" the dying victim cries,  
And all is still as death.

Another day, and that voice will,  
To men and demons say, "Be still!"  
And down shall idols fall,  
As Dagon fell in days of yore,  
The sacred ark of God before—  
And Christ shall reign o'er all.

And yet again shall come a time,  
When, seated on his throne sublime,  
    "Peace !" shall his voice command --  
And Good and Ill shall be unmixt,  
And in the stagnant gulf betwixt,  
    Eternity shall stand.

## CANTO X.

*Hell the ultimate receptacle of the ruins of hope—Hopes which have respect to time, and those which have relation to eternity—Elements of future anguish.*

“DRAW me water, hew me wood,”

To Evil standing by, said Good.

“To none will I a servant be,

And least of all, Sir Good, to thee.

I own no master and no judge,

And ne’er have been a slave or drudge.

Whilst you go fettered, I go free,

And none have power to challenge me.’

“So thinks the maniac in his cell,

And as fools think, so chimes the bell ;

But facts, in spite of thoughts, remain,  
And pain, called pleasure, still is pain ;  
And conscience gnaws, and fetters bind,  
Unchanged by maxims of mankind."

"For once thou hast the truth declared,  
And art in thine own net ensnared.  
Bound hand and foot, you freedom cry,—  
If this is not—what is a lie?"

"I speak the truth, yet ne'ertheless,  
That I am bound, I do confess,  
To do the good, and shun the ill,  
And so obey my Master's will."

"Bound ! master ! what is this, I pray,  
But downright, rankest slavery ?"

"Yes, such as binds the mother dove  
To feed the objects of her love.  
A master ! but a parent kind,  
Whose bonds with love and blessing bind."

"As much the lackey dog might say,  
And call his serfage liberty.  
That freedom is, and that alone,  
Where one can call his will his own,



And do whate'er he has a mind,  
Or this or that, as he's inclined."

"You speak of licence, but excess  
Is fruitful parent of distress.  
And shall we that thing freedom call,  
Which turns our blessings into gall?  
If licence leads but to unrest,  
'Twere better to be bound and blest."

"The plea of cowards, fools, and knaves,  
Of sycophants and cringing slaves!  
The manly heart rejects the plea,  
And at all hazards will be free."

"But is it free?"

"Free as the wind  
Which wanders whither 'tis inclined."

"Not so; it moves, or makes a pause,  
In strict regard to rigid laws;  
And all else moves or standeth still,  
Obedient to the Master's will."

"That may be false, or may be true,  
But this I know, that I can do

Whate'er I will, and when 'tis done  
I need to give account to none."

"Save to thyself!"

"Myself? thou fool!

Is self my master? I its tool?

Have I two selves? Why not say three?"

"There is a third!"

"And who is he?"

"One whom the future shall reveal;  
From whom no distance can conceal,  
Nor darkness hide."

"Pooh, pooh! a myth,  
Got up to frighten children with."

"A myth, whose fiat summoned forth  
The sun and stars and rolling earth.  
But what we dread, we would destroy,  
Whilst creeds that sanction guilty joy  
We take on trust—no matter what—  
If they our vices tolerate."

"The old stale cant!"

"But truth is old,  
And truth is truth, untold or told;

And error, error still remains,  
Though countless tongues its cause maintains."

"Go, bigot of a bootless cause,  
And preach to fools who catch at straws!"

"Such straws alone from wreck will save,  
In yonder world beyond the grave ;  
And those alone will wise be deemed,  
Who were, while here, as fools esteemed,  
And then will all be forced to see  
Which are the slaves, and who the free."

"No slave am I!"

"Yes, slave thou art!"

"To whom?"

"The evil passions of thy heart!"

These are thy masters and thy god,  
And rule thee with an iron rod.  
As water poured into a sieve,  
They promise much, but nothing give—  
Or give at best a fitful joy,  
To lure, to pamper, and destroy."

"Unblushing liar!"

“Nay, 'tis so,

And you yourself its truth do know ;  
Although the truth you strive to hide,  
To cheat thy fears and salve thy pride.  
These lords of thine thou must obey,  
And do their bidding night and day,  
Or else be whipped with thongs of fire,  
Forged in the flames of fierce desire.”

“'Tis false ! thrice false !—but were it so,  
'Tis not to you I service owe.”

“Yes ! He who formed the land and sea,  
And bade all worlds and creatures be,  
Who over all His works presides,  
Whose power upholds, and wisdom guides,—  
He, 'gainst thy purpose and thy will,  
To final good transforms thy ill,—  
And thus perforce constraineth you  
To do the thing thou wouldst not do.”

“And what, forsooth, is that to me,  
So long as I have liberty ?  
And what is better, you forget  
That oft your feet in stocks I've set,

And shut you up in dungeons foul  
To clank your chains, and weep and howl ;  
Or, for a holiday's delight,  
Compelled you with wild beasts to fight ;  
Or else, for darling change's sake,  
To bleed on block, or burn at stake.  
And call you this ' the hewing wood,  
And drawing water,' good Sir Good ? ”

“ I do ! For that dear blood you shed,  
Made what you meant to crush, to spread,  
And caused your victims sooner find  
The happy home for which they pined.”

“ Indeed ! ha, ha ! ”

“ Nay, laugh your fill,  
Yet slave thou art, do what you will ;  
A slave who thinks that he is free,  
Because he spurns authority,  
And brings with certain sudden crash  
Down on his back his master's lash.”

“ When ? where ? thou dotard ! ”

“ By disease,  
And by a heart that's ill at ease,

And fears, the sleuth-hounds of despair,  
That dog and haunt you everywhere."

"Hence, fool ! whilst there's an open door !"

"Nay, hear me out !"

"I'll hear no more !

Begone ! or you'll have cause to rue  
What righteous vengeance bids me do.  
Instead of wood, I'll hew thy head,  
And blood, instead of water, shed !"

"I go, but know that we shall meet  
Again, before the judgment-seat."

---

I.

How dread is that abyss, profound and vast,  
Into whose depths hope's ruins sink at last !  
A dismal deep which ever shall retain  
Its teeming sources of perennial pain.  
Ruins and ruined, ruins everywhere,—  
The grave of hope, and stronghold of despair.

The ruined hopes which had respect to earth,  
Oblivion buries in their place of birth ;  
For now 'tis seen, but ah ! too late is seen,  
How poor, how false, how empty they had been.  
But those false hopes which promised lasting bliss  
Descend and dwell in that abhorred abyss ;  
And each is armed with poisoned fang and sting,  
And, viper-like, they to their victims cling,  
And vain regrets and gnawings of remorse  
Give to their venom endless life and force.  
Mere earthly hopes are but as fungi fed  
By moisture oozing from the putrid dead.  
At morn, with pride, they greet the rising sun,  
Yet ere he sets corruption has begun ;  
But those false hopes shall live when Death shall die,  
And Time beside him in the tomb shall lie.

## II.

To that abode of withered hopes descend,  
Survey its scenes, and to its voices lend  
An open ear, which haply may impart  
Some useful lesson to the docile heart.

As waning moonlight in Norwegian woods,  
A lurid darkness o'er the region broods,  
And hollow rumbling sounds and hissings come,  
As from a place where earthquakes have their home ;  
And ever and anon, afar and near,  
Loud shrieks and laughter burst upon the ear ;  
And all around an air of gloom is spread,  
Like that which hangs above the charnelled dead.

## III.

Dread are the scenes without, but where begin  
To paint the darker scenery within ?  
'Tis not in objects which the senses greet,  
But in the mind perdition has its seat ;  
Nor may material anguish once compare  
With that which spirit may be made to bear.  
Each left behind his idols of the earth,  
His wealth, his pleasures, power, or pride of birth,  
And brought alone what can alone be brought,  
The fruits of action and of evil thought.  
A harvest rank, in gall and wormwood steeped,  
For ever reaping, evermore unreaped,—



And spurious hopes, by self-deception bred,  
And evil passions by indulgence fed,  
Until with bands of brass they bound the soul,  
And bowed it down beneath their dread control.

These all have come, and legion is their name,  
And each unrolls its scroll of written flame,  
Which memory there with iron pen did write,  
And holds it up before the victim's sight ;  
And then regret, remorse, and grim despair,  
With fangs of fire his tortured spirit tear.

## IV.

It needs no coals to give perdition birth,  
Hells may be kindled on the dewy earth.  
Behold the murderer writhing in remorse,  
As he in vision sees the bleeding corse !  
See yonder drunkard as from fiends he flies,  
Or fights with slimy snakes with bloodshot eyes !  
Ask each, what lavish bribe would lure  
His free consent, those pangs to re-endure ?  
It matters not what are the means employed,  
If all that makes life precious be destroyed,—

Fire, worms, or thought : what matters it if still  
The weapons used the soul with anguish fill ?  
But in each mind and brain materials dwell,  
To make a heaven, or to form a hell ;  
As in the bowels of the earth reside  
Sufficient powers to blow its crust aside.

## v.

Not to the centres of that place of woe,  
Which stretch afar, and darken as they go,  
Thy footsteps bend, for there confusion reigns,  
And ceaseless clamour shakes the guilty plains ;  
And shifting, restless throngs pass to and fro,  
Each giving vent to his peculiar woe ;  
And wranglings fierce, and conflicts dire 'mong those,  
Who, whilst they dwelt on earth, were bitter foes ;  
And all around confusion and uproar,  
As when a battle shouts, or billows lash the shore ;  
For grim despair, its anguish to assuage,  
Breaks out in curses and in bursts of rage.

Here, then, within this outskirt let us stay,  
For hither stragglers seem to find their way ;

Behind this clump of lava let us hide,  
And patient wait, and see what may betide.

---

A bar of sand full half a mile,  
Ran out into the bay,  
And ended in a rocky pile,  
Where shells and sea-weed lay ;  
And when the tide was out, the sand  
And rock were naked as the land.

And thither children sometimes went,  
Though counselled not to go ;  
And stolen hours of pastime spent  
Between the ebb and flow :  
For youth in quest of pleasure will  
At danger's well its pitcher fill.

A band of little boys, one day,  
To that sea playground stole,  
That they might take their fill of play  
Unhampered by control ;  
And after various sports were past,  
They needs must merchants be at last.

The busy hucksters ply their trade,  
And laud their peerless stock ;  
And promptly purchases are paid  
In cowries of the rock.  
And here a group each other chaff,  
And there they scold and shout and laugh.

But whilst the mimic scene goes on,  
The tide o'erflows the bar,  
And up the rock it mounts anon,  
To where the mimers are.  
At length a wave, with foaming crest,  
Sweeps o'er the place, and sinks to rest.

---

A loud and frantic cry they raise,  
Which reaches to the shore ;  
And men, in fear and wild amaze,  
Seize hold of boat and oar :  
But ere the boat can reach to save,  
The youths have sunk beneath the wave.

Thus men, upon the ledge of time,  
Their busy pursuits ply,  
Whilst up the stealthy billows climb  
Of near eternity.  
The death-waves rise and seal their fate,  
And they awake,—but wake too late.

## CANTO XI.

*Perdition continued—The self-idolater—The sensualist  
—The miser—The legal plunderer—The mercen-  
ary priest and his victims—The inquisitor—The  
misinterpreter of divine mercy—The procrastinator  
—Undutiful parents—Seducer and seduced—Dia-  
logue between two lost spirits—Fruitless attempts  
at self-destruction—Conclusion.*

I MET a pilgrim by the way,

And asked of him the time of day,

And waited his reply.

“Time,” said he, “time is not the same

To you and me, except in name.

You ask the reason why?

“Time to mankind but means probation,

And is but part of that duration

Which we eternal call.

Time, therefore, is as we employ it,  
And short or long as we enjoy it,—  
And this is so to all.

“Once on a fever bed I lay,  
And wild delirium, night and day,  
My anguished spirit tost.  
My thoughts arose in scorpion throngs,  
And, thrusting out their forkèd tongues,  
They cried out, ‘I was lost!’

“I bade them fetch me water fast.  
They said they ran ; but hours went past  
Ere I the water got.  
I heard a coach go by the door.  
It took an hour to pass, and more—  
The rattling wheels moved not.

“I heard them say, in whisperings low,  
‘Nine days and nights he has been so,  
And troubled in his mind.’

‘Nine days and nights !—nine months,’ I said,  
‘I’ve lain and tossed upon this bed,  
With scorpions round me twined.’

“O God ! within that time, I’m sure,  
I suffered more than most endure  
Between their death and birth !  
There needeth no material fire,  
But mind and brain, to light a pyre  
Which shall be hell on earth.

“And if on earth, then, why not there  
Where broods the darkness of despair,  
And hope returneth never ?  
A stagnant present, never past,  
By crowding horrors still held fast,  
And held by them for ever.”

---



## I.

"Strange ! each should turn aside when coming near.  
They surely cannot see us lying here  
Behind this lava hid."

"No : each apart  
Holds bitter converse with his wretched heart."

"Hush ! here comes one at last, by anguish bowed.  
He stops, is silent, then he talks aloud,  
And seems like one who calls the muster-roll  
Of memories dread, that agonise his soul."

"Yes ; these like fossils in the rock remain,  
Or fixed ideas in the madman's brain."

"Had I but held my mother's counsels fast,  
I might to-day—— But days and years are past.  
Ah ! how she strove ! Fool that I was, to think  
That all was safe, whilst on yon horrid brink  
I lay in peace supine. My altar blazed,  
But not to God. To Self the song was raised,  
And not to Him. And yet I thought the while  
That I was basking in His sweetest smile,  
And that a place, a throne and mansion bright,  
The nearest to Himself, was mine by right.

And yet, like dead tree in the morning ray,  
Besprent with dew, a shining corse I lay.  
Oh ! hope accursed ! ”

With deep and bitter sigh,  
And smiting on his breast, he passes by.

## II.

Anon there draweth nigh one ill at ease,  
Out-puffed and bloated as by foul disease.  
For as the inner man the outer moulds,  
The law in spirit as in matter holds ;  
And ruling passions, which the mind control,  
Their lasting impress leave upon the soul.

Next comes in sight a shape of dwarfish size,  
With lean and hungry form and wolfish eyes,  
Which, restless ever, downward are inclined  
In search of something which they cannot find.  
He meets a pool of lava, seething hot,  
And there he stands, as rooted to the spot,  
And on its golden hues he seems to gloat.  
As others pass, they say, with biting jeer,  
“ Your god can't help you—gold is powerless here ! ”

## III.

Two forthwith meet, and one, with deadly hate,  
Exclaims, "I told you this would be your fate.  
Vile wretch ! you filled your avaricious maw  
By wiles and plunder, and you called it law !  
The perjurer you hired, and deeds you forged,  
Until with widows' means your bags were gorged.  
One would you now cajole, and then abuse,  
And rob the orphan of his rightful dues.  
The simple-minded were your special prey,  
And traps you set th' unwary to betray.  
And I, poor arrant fool, your words believed,  
And, like the rest, was plundered and deceived.  
Thy heart was shut against complaints and tears,  
And open only to your selfish fears.  
But these, and qualms of conscience, to allay,  
You feigned religion, and began to pray,  
And took to church ; and by your looks sedate,  
And open alms, and studied pious gait,  
You lulled suspicion ; and your wealth increased,—  
And as it grew, the more you plucked and fleeced."

“Hence ! lying wretch !—what better hast thou  
been ?

Since thou art here, ’tis proof enough, I ween.”

“Proof I was false to God, but not to man ;  
But you to both—deny it if you can.”

“’Tis waste of words to reason with a fool.”

“My hell is hot—compared with thine ’tis cool.  
You have both hypocrite’s and villain’s share,  
Each one of which is hard enough to bear ;  
But you, perchance, have got the court above  
To temper both, from pity or for love.”

“Away ! you scum, and vilest of the vile !  
This place itself your foul speech will defile.”

“If words defile, what must the deeds, which  
they,  
But vainly, strive their vileness to portray ?”

“Insulting wretch ! who would not from thee fly ?”

“Adieu, sweet friend. I’ll meet you by-and-by,  
And have a talk about thy worldly wealth.  
Long may you live, have inward peace and health !”

Like one relieved of some oppressive load,  
Away, with smile and quickened step, he strode.

## IV.

An hour, or more it might be, passed away,  
Ere one appeared our patience to repay.  
At length, from out a cloud of dingy smoke,  
A distant shape upon our vision broke.  
Behold, he hither comes with stealthy pace,  
And crafty look, and pale and unctuous face.  
He mutters out some words, and then, in fear,  
He looks around to see that none are near.  
Assured he is alone, he comes this way,  
To vent his sins and sorrows as he may.

## V.

“Thrice blinded wretch ! I knew what was in store—  
I knew at first it was a mask I wore ;  
For I remember—oh ! infernal art !—  
I studied well, and oft rehearsed my part,  
And came, as actors come upon the stage,  
With show of zeal, in God’s work to engage.  
And, certes, I was prompt in outward rite,  
And took in dress and pageant much delight.

My end was gain, and not religion's cause ;  
And gain I got, and breath of men's applause.  
And I was called an angel from the skies,  
A child of God, and precious in His eyes.  
At first their praises stung me with remorse ;  
But still to anodynes I had recourse.  
Why turned I not ? why gave I conscience o'er  
To reasons hollow as the mask I wore ?  
Oh ! matchless impudence ! Full oft I drew  
The living portrait of myself, and threw  
Upon it foul disdain and bitter scorn,  
Their eyes to blind, my conscience to suborn.  
The means by which my fellows I deceived,  
Deceived myself at last ; and I believed,  
Believed that all was right, and, in the end,  
Believed that God was my indebted friend.  
Ah ! dreadful curse !—ah ! worst of deaths to die !  
To come down here believing in a lie !  
I might have known—nay, I knew it well—  
A spider's web above the mouth of hell !  
How many, like myself, have come down here ?  
And still they come !—fresh levies still appear !—  
I dread the victims which I left behind."

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## VI.

He stood as one whom sudden pain enthralls,  
And shook, as shakes a tower before it falls,  
Until, uproused by imprecations dire,  
Which came from one whose tongue was set on  
fire,

Abrupt he turned, and spread each hurried plume,  
And soon was lost amidst the neighbouring gloom.  
The voice drew near, and, as it nearer drew,  
More loud and fierce and terrible it grew.

“I’ve found you out at last, consummate knave !  
You took my gold, and said it would me save ;  
And I believed ! You knew it was a lie.  
In vain, poltroon, you think from me to fly !  
You shall not, wretch, my righteous vengeance shun !  
The hunt you dread is only but begun !  
And other victims follow at my back,  
Who, like myself, have got upon thy track.  
Think not to wheedle, as you did of yore—  
Your oily looks and lies will cheat no more.”


So loud she screamed, as after him she flew,  
That each stood still, or from the place withdrew.

He turned and doubled, sore by anguish wrung ;  
But close to him his swift tormentor clung,  
And at his head her bitter curses flung.

Past with a rush a troop of furies went  
With breathless speed, like sleuth-hounds on the scent.  
It was a sight of horror to behold,  
That dimmed the eyes, and made the blood run cold.

## VII.

Out from the darkness other spirits came,  
And hid themselves again, as if in shame ;  
And some went round about, or to and fro,  
Each muttering to himself his ceaseless woe ;—  
Whilst others stood, and moved not from the spot,  
In silence brooding o'er their wretched lot.  
And ever and anon was heard a shout  
Of fiendish rage, and then came rushing out  
A band of spectres, fighting as they flew,  
Then, wheeling inward, vanished from the view.  
One seemed a tyrant, by his fallen crest,  
With troops of vengeful subjects sore oppress ;





And one, with slow and sulky wing, withdrew,  
'Midst shouts of "Villain! where's your rack and  
screw?"

Assassin, thief, and pimp, and courtesan,  
And basest types of vitiated man,  
All seemed commingled in that rabble crowd,  
Which writhed and twisted like a thunder-cloud.

## VIII.

"Let's hence! I'm sick of sights like these. They  
make

The very marrow in my bones to quake."

"If here there are such conflicts, woe, and sin,  
What must it be in crowded slums within?  
But stay a while. Why should we go away?  
Since we are here, 'tis best a while to stay."

"The pain I suffer!"

"But I suffer too,

And do not mean this visit to renew.

'Twill not be long—at least 'tis likely not—  
Till others visit this outlying spot.

“Said I not right? See, yonder cometh one  
Who seems disposed all fellowship to shun.  
He comes this way, dejected and forlorn.  
He speaks! Give ear!”

“Would I had ne’er been born!  
Would I had ne’er the Gospel heard! It seemed  
So vast a blessing and so free, I deemed  
That I was safe, whatever I might do.  
I hid its words and warnings from my view,  
And when a doubt arose, I calmed my mind,  
And asked,—‘If One so merciful and kind  
Could ever carry out those threatenings dire,  
And cast His creatures into penal fire?  
Does He take pleasure in beholding pain,  
And love to dwell where sin and torment reign?  
The thought were monstrous, blasphemous, and vile,  
The spawn of priestcraft and satanic guile!’

“Ah, fatal logic! on thy sand I built  
A hollow pile of ruin and of guilt.  
Would I had ne’er been born!”

“Your case was mine,”  
Said one who came behind.

“And mine was thine,”

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Another said.

“ And mine, ’tis sad to tell  
Was of that sort which fills the half of hell,”  
A third averred. “ I meant some future day,  
To sue for peace, and enter on that way  
Which leads to life ; but still it was delayed,  
For pressing claims upon my time were made.  
And oft I set a time, and when it came,  
Another time more fitting I would name  
When all things would be right, and leisure  
given,

And then in earnest I would live for heaven.  
But still as age drew on, and blood grew thin,  
I felt the more reluctant to begin,  
In hopes that something, somewhere, would arise,  
To move my mind and lift it to the skies.  
And thus whilst I put off from day to day,  
Death came one night and summoned me away.  
Alarmed, I saw my dread impending fate,  
And cried for mercy !—but it was too late.”

He ended amidst uproar wild, which came  
From voices in the rear.

“ On you the blame

Of our damnation lies," the voices cry  
To two in front, who seek from them to fly.  
"You taught us how to swear, but not to pray,  
And lured us into vice, and led the way."

Like flight of battle arrows past they swept,  
And curdling horror through our vitals crept.  
Anon was heard the loud and vengeful words,—

"Be thine the hottest place which hell affords !  
Seducer vile ! you plied your cursèd arts,  
And took advantage of our guileless hearts,  
And left us, to our sorrow and our shame,  
To sink into the wretches we became."

"I cannot bear it longer—come away."  
"Stay but this once—I will not longer stay,  
Stay till these stragglers on our right shall meet ;  
I see the one, the other means to greet."

"My fellow damned, this is a horrid place ;  
I've searched and searched to get a moment's space  
From restless pangs, but rest I cannot find."

"Hast not yet learned that hell is in your mind ?  
You must have lately come. Soon will you know  
That hell goes with you wheresoe'er you go."

Belike you'll try, as others do, by scoff,  
And curse, and jeer, to laugh and shake it off ;  
But vainly, be persuaded, will you try.—  
And then, the next resource, you'll wish to die ;  
But death has here no residue of power,  
Else would this black abyss within an hour  
Be empty left,—for who would choose to stay,  
If he by suicide could get away ?”

“ But surely some device may yet be got,  
By which destruction may become our lot.”

“ Ha, ha ! I well remember long ago,  
How long I cannot tell, for hours in woe  
Seem years—but this I do remember well,  
A band of alchemists once met in hell,  
Who, after long and eager search, declared  
Explosive elements could be prepared,  
Which, brought together in sufficient heap,  
Would blow it up, and all its inmates sweep  
Into annihilation. Millions wrought,  
Until huge masses were together brought,  
That stretched away for leagues, and rose as high  
As rise the Switzer Alps into the sky.

And verily they smoked, and hissed, and roared,  
And flaming missiles from their entrails poured,  
And seemed impatient to give scope and vent  
To that chaotic mass within them pent.  
And these were hailed as pledges of success,  
And those who jeered before, now taunted less,  
And most at last abjured their former creed,  
And said the thing was certain to succeed ;  
But I remembered what of old was writ—  
'They'll seek for death, but death their grasp will  
quit.'

"Excitement now, deep-seated and intense,  
Held myriads fast in fetters of suspense.

"At length 'twas finished !—and away there went  
A thousand couriers, on the errand sent  
To summon all to come with utmost speed,  
Who wished from life and torment to be freed.

"They came in rabble mass, and roofed the sky,  
Flight after flight, fast as their wings could fly,  
A countless number—hailing as they came !—  
And those below re-echoed their acclaim.

In wild confusion, and with deafening shout,  
Still on they came, like armies put to rout ;  
Till then I knew not, nor had sought to know,  
That such vast multitudes were doomed to woe.  
Afar and near, they lighted down, and there,  
With Babel sounds they rent the murky air,  
And gazed with eager eyes, and aspects wild,  
Upon the massive heights above them piled ;  
And as their flaming missiles upward passed,  
A lurid light upon their forms was cast,  
And cries arose, ' We'll have our wish at last !'

“ A signal was unfurled, and up they sprung,  
And with convulsive grasp they seized and clung  
To those huge masses of infernal mould,  
In shorter space than can in words be told.  
Afar and near, the heights from peak to base,  
Were covered up within their strict embrace ;  
And there they lay, pile heaped on swarming pile,  
Like clouds of locusts weltering in the Nile,  
In frantic hope that death would end their woe,  
And shame the fiends that stood and mocked below,

And cried aloud in simulated pain,  
'A long farewell!—we ne'er shall meet again!'

"At length the mountains shook, and up there went  
A stream of shells as if from mortars sent :  
A loud and universal cry was raised,  
As o'er their heads the bolts and meteors blazed.  
But silence followed, and a sense of shame,  
Whilst peals of laughter from the demons came.

"Some mine was sprung—but what, I cannot tell ;  
A loud explosion shook th' abyss of hell,  
And up there rose a thick impervious smoke,  
With lava mixed, and blocks of burning rock ;  
And when the thick confusion cleared away,  
All scattered, but unscathed, they hung in blank  
dismay.

Loud curses rose, and loosed was every tongue,  
And fiendish laughter 'midst the tumult rung ;  
And then a sullen silence sunk in hell,  
And over all a deeper darkness fell."

"Alas ! alas ! what pity 'tis it failed !—  
Has nothing since been tried ?"

"Yes ; some impaled



Themselves on spikes stuck deep into the soil,  
And caused huge stacks of bitumen to boil  
And blaze about their souls. But forth they came,  
As comes a rod of steel from out the flame,  
Saluted by a peal of laughter loud,  
And bitter jeers from the surrounding crowd."

"'Twas wrong to treat them so!"

"Wrong!—what is right?—

Where all is wrong, right thrones itself in might,  
And might in selfishness."

"Have demons ne'er essayed

To find out death?"

"At first they effort made,

But found that matter could not mind destroy."

"And can they not some other means employ?"

"What other means?—if mind and matter fail,  
What else remains?"

"Might moral not prevail?"

"'Tis true!—they tried that too, as I've been told.

It was their last attempt. The scheme was bold  
And blasphemous, and seemed to promise well."

"And was?"

“ At given time and place, all hell  
In conclave met, and after long debate  
On divers themes, which roused their deadliest hate,  
One rose, at preconcerted signal given,  
And launched his thunders 'gainst the King of  
heaven,  
And swore He reigned, if reign He did, in fear  
Lest they with rallied ranks should reappear.  
' We are immortal as Himself ! ' he cried.  
“ ‘ We are ! ’ a myriad maddened tongues replied.  
' We dare Him, if He can, to blot us out ! '  
“ ‘ We do ! ’ the fierce assenting legions shout.  
' And if He cannot, Now, destroy our race,  
We call Him hence a braggart to His face !—  
A craven despot, trembling for His throne,  
Glad to have peace, by letting us alone.'  
“ ‘ As well He may ! ’ with bitter taunts they cry.  
' As well He may ! ’ the sides of hell reply.  
“ ‘ Arise ! and bid Him crush us if He dare ! '  
“ They rose in mass, and clove the grimy air  
With one defiant shout—their bosoms bared,  
And wings outspread—to slay them if He dared.—

But silence deep, as silence of the grave,  
The only answer to their challenge gave."

"It seems a hopeless case !"

"It is !—not seems !—

And he who thinks 'tis not, but idly dreams.

'Tis worse to hope for that which cannot be,  
Than yield at once to stern necessity.

For hope gives double edge to fierce desire,

As lakes of mist set pilgrim's thirst on fire ;

He may a fountain find, but here in hell

'Tis torrid desert all, without a well ;

For ages past I've sought it round and round,

But not a drop of water have I found.

Above, 'mong men, the shadows come and go,

But here, 'tis blank monotony of woe.

How blest; if madness would our thoughts en-  
thral,

Or dreamy stupor on our spirits fall !

A change of anguish, though from bad to worse,

Would shift the scene, and mitigate the curse.

Sleep, change, respite, attemper mortal woe,

But here, nor rest nor change we ever know.

The spirit is asbestos in the fire,  
And all our pangs are petrifications dire ;  
And if perchance hope gleams across the mind,  
It meteor-like leaves deeper night behind.  
Time may on earth hope's ruined piles repair,  
But all her ruins here are ruins of despair."

He ceased : and horror-struck we took our way  
Back to the realms of welcome night and day,  
Where hope has still a home, and bubbling foun-  
tains play.

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It comes ! it comes !

Night and day

'Tis on its way—

It comes ! it comes !

War may beat his battle-drums,

Still with rapid flight it comes ;

Peace upon her pipes may play,

Still it hastens on its way—

It comes ! it comes !

It comes ! it comes !

It will not stay,

Nor brook delay—

It comes ! it comes !

Man may mock, or man may pray,

Still it hastens on its way ;

Doubt may jeer, or mercy plead,

Still it comes with utmost speed—

It comes ! it comes !

It comes ! it comes !

Nor fear nor force

Can stay its course—

It comes ! it comes !

Men may live, or men may die,

Men believe, or men deny,

Kingdoms fall, or kingdoms rise,

Still on eagle's wings it flies—

It comes ! it comes !

It comes ! it comes !

Night and day

'Tis on its way—

It comes ! it comes !

Vainly men shall weep and pray,

Pleading for an hour's delay :—

Striking Time and all things dumb,

Like a thunder-clap 'twill come !

It comes ! it comes !

THE ANCIENT HOUSE

---

THERE is a house, an ancient house,  
A house with an earthen floor,  
And its walls are damp, and its roof is low,  
And it has neither window nor door.  
And all unfurnished is that house,  
And desolate and bare,  
And very dark, for night nor day  
Is candle lighted there ;  
But if not light nor mirth be there,  
'Tis free from changes, grief, and care.

It is the oldest house on earth,  
And never knows decay,  
Though not of brass nor marble built,  
But of the common clay.

And it freely takes all comers in,  
    Whatever they may be ;  
And it gives the waif as soft a bed,  
    As the man of high degree :  
But blanket none, however cold,  
Does it provide for young or old.

Its beds are made of various size,  
    Where each may fitly sleep,  
With tier o'er tier, like berths in ships  
    That sail the briny deep.  
And ne'er did vessel ever sail  
    With such a motley crew,  
For men of every clime are there—  
    Of every caste and hue ;  
And none or grudge or malice bear,  
But all alike the mansion share.

Its rooms are all bed-chambers small,  
    For none come there to bait ;  
But each to sleep the long night through,  
    And for the morn to wait.



And there each lies in scanty space—  
    Some six feet long by three—  
And if a comrade is let down,  
    Nor crushed nor waked is he ;  
For each gives welcome to a brother,  
And all accommodate each other.

By opened roof, and not by door,  
    The guests admittance find,  
As once they lowered down to Christ  
    The palsied and the blind.  
The grass grows green upon the roof,  
    And birds sing blithe without,  
And near it oft the lambkins play,  
    And merry children shout ;  
But still within the sleepers sleep,  
    For death and darkness silence keep.

Thus doorless, dark, and windowless,  
    And silent, damp, and cold,  
All dreary stands that ancient house,  
    And dormitory old.

And whether kingdoms rise or fall,  
It neither knows nor cares ;  
And all the inmates of that house,  
Its own oblivion shares :  
The world with wars or storms may shake,  
But storms nor wars their sleep can break.

More tenants has this ancient house,  
Than all else 'neath the sun ;  
For it ne'er refuses any man,  
And ne'er dismisses one.  
And every one goes there at last,  
And finds sufficient room,  
And holds his place by leasehold fast,  
Until the day of doom :  
But each one then from it must sever,  
And rise and quit that house for ever.

## THE HEART OF OCEAN.

---

BEATING, beating, beating ever !  
Never ceasing, ceasing never !  
Summer, winter, night and day,  
Still thy patient pulses play.  
Suns may set and stars may rise,  
Meteors shoot athwart the skies,  
Lightnings flash and thunders roll,  
Icebergs heave around the pole,  
Storms and whirlpools may convulse,  
Still thy heart, with equal pulse,  
    Beateth, beateth ever !  
    Ceaseth, ceaseth never !

Wrecks may on thy bosom float—  
Sink or swim, thou carest not ;  
Drowning men for help may cry,  
Heedless, thou giv'st no reply ;  
Kings and subjects, lords and slaves,  
Sink alike beneath thy waves.  
Ships may founder, burn, or rend,  
Crews into thy depths descend ;  
Still thy heart unaltered beats,  
And its constant throb repeats—  
    Beating, beating ever !  
    Ceasing, ceasing never !

Beats thy heart with quickened beat,  
When in fight thy monsters meet ?  
Or volcanoes from below,  
Islands to thy surface throw ?  
Goes it nearer to thy heart,  
When from thee old friends depart ?  
And the earthquake yawning wide,  
Buries isles beneath thy tide ?—

These may seem to stir thy breast,  
But beneath thy heart's at rest,  
    Beating, beating ever !  
    Ceasing, ceasing never !

Standing on this seaward height,  
Sinks the red sun out of sight ;  
Slowly o'er the lapping waves,  
Weary sea-fowl seek their caves ;  
Noisy day's contentions cease,  
Sombre night descends in peace ;  
Hear I now that measured beat !  
Thrills the crag beneath my feet !  
And along the shelving shore,  
Booms that deep bass evermore—  
    Beating, beating ever !  
    Ceasing, ceasing never !

1

MATERNAL NIGHT.

---

MATERNAL Night came gently forth,  
As waned the setting sun,  
And all the stars in heaven's roof,  
She lighted one by one.  
And when her num'rous task was done,  
She bent her dewy head,  
And lifted up her warning hand,  
And oped her mouth and said,—  
“Now let no mirth or noise be made,  
For I must put them all to bed.”

She straightway shut the insect's wing,  
And stretched the beast to rest,  
And stilled the fish in stream and sea,  
And bird in brake and nest,

And laid the babe on mother's breast,  
And labour's limbs composed,  
And care surprised, and sickness soothed,  
And sorrow's eyelids closed.  
"Now let there be no noise," she said,  
"For I have put them all to bed."

And all night long she sat and watched  
Within that chamber vast,  
And when the full-orbed moon arose,  
She clouds around her cast ;  
And called upon the piping winds,  
And warbling waves and streams,  
To sing their softest lullabies,  
And give unbroken dreams.  
And there she sat and vigil kept,  
And mother's tears she o'er them wept,  
And soothed and blessed them while they slept.

A FAIRY'S WEDDING FESTIVAL.

---

It was a lovely moonlight night,  
And all the stars were out,  
And little fleecy silver clouds,  
Were moving all about ;  
And all the hills were milky white ;  
And all the woolly sheep  
Lay here and there upon the heights,  
Outstretched in balmy sleep.  
And far and near was nothing heard,  
Except the cry of some hill bird—  
Some 'lated curlew passing by,  
Or wakeful lapwing's fretful cry.

---



I laid me down upon the grass,  
My hand beneath my head,  
And gazed upon the tranquil scene  
Which all around me spread.  
And mystic visions to my mind  
Were one by one unfurled—  
Such visions as the fancy brings  
From out the spirit world.  
When, lo, I heard sweet music come,  
As if from trumpet, pipe, and drum ;  
So shrill and thin, it seemed to be  
Some kind of small birds' minstrelsy—  
Yet sweet as breath of birchen bower,  
When gently falls the evening shower.

I turned and looked, and, lo ! there came,  
A numerous train in sight,  
Of tiny things in human form,  
All clad in raiment bright,  
Which blazed with gems and burnished gold,  
And in the moonlight shone,

As shines the robes of Eastern king  
    When seated on his throne.  
And as the front ranks made advance,  
I saw each bore a shield and lance ;  
And each a little steed bestrode,  
Which prancing came along the road.

Along a path the sheep had worn,  
    Some four inch wide or so,  
They came, but not in single file,  
    As sheep are wont to go—  
But six abreast, in order due,  
    With room enough between ;  
And close behind a mounted band  
    Appeared in tunics green.  
Like silver wires their trumpets seemed,  
Which in the moonbeams glanced and gleamed ;  
And such a music gave they forth,  
As ne'er before was heard on earth.

A strong brigade of body-guards  
    Were next in order told,

Whose fiery steeds were blazoned o'er

With burnished cloth-of-gold.

And then a line of chariots came

With six outriders gay,

And three abreast they rolled along

That four-inch narrow way.

And little ladies sat inside,

And tossed their little heads in pride ;

And talked, and pouted, and looked out,

To see what others were about.

An open space now intervened,

And then six horsemen came,

Who banners waved and shouted out

Some high imperial name.

Another vacant space ensued,

When, lo ! a chariot bright,

Which seemed a diamond hollowed out,

Came rolling into sight.

Ten snowy palfreys drew it on,

And each in gorgeous trappings shone ;


And Twain, in ermine, sat inside,  
Who seemed a bridegroom and his bride—  
So passing fair was she, I ween,  
That ne'er on earth was fairer seen.

Away the vast procession stretched,  
In peerless pomp and pride,  
And waving like a lens, it gleamed  
Along the mountain-side.

Now those in front deployed aside  
Into an open space,  
Which level lay between the hills—  
A sweet secluded place.

With short dry grass 'twas covered o'er,  
Which marks of former revels bore ;  
And there they formed encamping-ground,  
And ranged the chariots all around.

When all assembled, down they sat  
Upon the crispy ground,  
And dainty meats were dealt to each,  
And goblets handed round.



A trumpet sounded loud and shrill !  
Each brimming cup is filled,—  
They rise in mass ! “The queen !” they cry :  
The sparkling draught is swilled !  
And then they swing their beakers round,  
And stamp their feet upon the ground,  
And pause a space, and shout between,  
“The queen ! the queen ! long live the queen !”

Around the bridal chariot next,  
In promenade they walk,  
And as in merry bands they go,  
They flirt, and smile, and talk.  
Anon there comes a rider forth,  
With banner in his hand ;  
He holds it up ! and round him, all  
In mute attention stand.  
He speaks !—and warming with his theme,  
His nostrils swell, his eyeballs gleam :  
“Long live the wedded pair !” he cries.  
Away a flight of rockets flies,  
And loud huzzas salute the skies.

The band strikes up ! the space is cleared  
And each his partner brings,  
And down in flying groups they spin,  
Or whirl about in rings.  
They sing, they shout, they leap upright—  
Th' excited horses neigh !—  
They laugh ! and off, with double speed,  
They bound and whirl away ;  
Whirl and bound, and leap and sing,  
Down the course and round the ring,  
Casting many a somersault,  
As o'er each other's heads they vault.

Thus have we seen in sunflower broad,  
Upon a summer day,  
Beneath the microscope revealed,  
An insect world at play,  
Which wheeled, salaamed, and leapt and danced,  
And down their sweethearts led,  
Then jumping on each other's backs,  
Away as racers sped ;

Whilst here and there to shady grove,  
One led aside his lady-love :  
And truly 'twas a pleasant sight,  
Which well might angel's heart delight.

Now, off to choose their favourite sports,  
The fairies speed away—  
Some heave the stone, some throw the quoit,  
    And some at skittles play ;  
And others leap, and wrestle some,  
    And some the racecourse try ;  
The fleet of foot are rushing here,  
    The horsemen yonder fly.  
And yonder chariots scour along,  
Whose smoking steeds, with spur and thong  
Are pricked to speed, and as they pass,  
The burning wheels inflame the grass ;  
And as the winner gains the post,  
Applauding shouts his ears accost ;  
And little elfines at the breast,  
Leap up, and clamour with the rest.

Once more the trumpet sounds !—" A song ! "

The herald cries—" a song ! "

· Vivella sings ! " The siren's name

Recalls the scattered throng.

She sings !—and plaudits echo round ;

And then the Royal Choir,

The " Fairy's Marriage-Feast Chorale,"

Strike up with voice and lyre.

Forthwith in two th' assemblage breaks,

And each his wonted station takes.

One side the opening stanza sings,

The other back the cadence flings ;

And then collecting all their might,

In blended chorus they unite.

Down through the midst a trooper rides,

In coat of mail arrayed,—

" The moon is slanting, let the lists

With all despatch be made."

Wide at a bound they opened up,

And to and fro they flew,

---



And some stuck stakes into the ground,  
And others cordage drew  
Of spider's threads, from pin to pin,  
To palisade the tilters in,—  
And ere a wren its song could sing,  
All ready stood the finished ring.

“Oyez ! oyez !”—a herald cries—

“The queen assigns to-night  
The princess Starlight as his prize

Who conquers in the fight.”

Full fifty horsemen plumed and mailed,

And armed with lance and shield,

Come rushing up, and inward pass,

Into the tented field,—

And half, to westward turns aside,

The other takes the further side,

And each assumes his lance, and draws

His visor down, and stands at pause.

The trumpet sounded !—on they dashed !—

And when the shock was given,

Full twenty lay upon the ground,  
With shields and lances riven.  
The lists are cleared !—they come again !—  
And “Starlight” is the cry !—  
And thirteen more upon the grass,  
Unhorsed and wounded lie.  
“Since sinks the moon in western skies,  
The queen commands”—the herald cries—  
“That single combat shall decide,  
To whom the princess shall be bride !”  
The lots go round !—and one is he,  
That Starlight longs her mate to be.

She trembles as the tilters close,  
And darkness dims her eyes,—  
But soon the echoing shouts proclaim  
She is her loved one's prize.  
The queen steps forth, and in her hand  
She holds a chaplet bright,  
And calls on him aloud by name,  
The victor in the fight !


He kneels ! But whilst he kneels—a cry,  
As of some demon, rends the sky !  
The scene dissolves !—I startled wake !  
Hoarse eldritch screams above me break !  
A lapwing !—wretch !—had crossed my path,  
And down upon me pours its wrath.

# THE POLAR STAR.

---

POLAR star ! polar star !  
 Bright thou shinest from afar,  
     Polar star !  
 Lifting up thy beacon light,  
 Pharos of the northern night,  
 Thou dost fling it far and free  
 O'er the dark and lonely sea,  
     Polar star !

Polar star ! polar star !  
 Could I fly to where you are,  
     Polar star !



Then with thee I might behold  
Hoary winter, stern and cold,  
Rigid, silent, and alone,  
Seated on his iceberg throne,  
Polar star !

Polar star ! polar star !  
Be the winds at peace or war,  
Polar star !  
From beneath the trees and shrouds,  
Through the openings in the clouds,  
Flying slave and ship at sea  
Nightly lift their eyes to thee,  
Polar star !

Erring sail and slave in flight  
Thus correct their course by night,  
Polar star !  
Pilgrims, too, pursue their way,  
Guided by thy friendly ray ;

And their course with safety steer,  
Through the steppe and desert drear,  
Polar star !

Planets vagrant shift in space,  
Steadfast thou retain'st thy place,  
Polar star !

Lighting up thy cresset nightly,  
Shining still serene and brightly,  
As when first angelic eyes  
Saw thee in thy splendour rise,  
Polar star !

Glancing back o'er ages past,  
There, beside the creaking mast,  
Polar star !

While they skirt the timid shore,  
Gleaming out from days of yore,  
We behold unnumbered eyes  
Gazing upward to the skies,  
Polar star !

Polar star ! polar star !

Clouds may roll and tempests war,

Polar star !

Yet along the troubled deep

Fleets secure their reckonings keep,

Since beneath, by land and sea,

True the needle points to thee,

Polar star !

Long that silent friend of thine

Lay as gem within the mine,

Polar star !

Now to all who sail the sea

Faithful still it turns to thee,

And when clouds obscure thy ray,

Takes thy place and points the way,


Polar star !

THE OLD HEARSE.

---

“THE hearse is coming !” shouted, as they ran,  
A crowd of boys and girls. And maid and man  
Flung windows up, or rushed into the street—  
And some ran off the vehicle to meet ;  
For it was deemed a wonder to be seen,  
And had for weeks the village topic been.

“The hearse is coming !”—on the tidings flew !  
Down with a clang the smith his hammer threw.  
Away went weaver’s lay and delver’s spade,  
And forth from tub and wheel rushed wife and maid ;  
And age took up its staff and stuttered out,  
To see what all the hubbub was about.





“The hearse is come ! hurrah !” the children cried,  
And noisy curs with bound and bark replied.

And there it was at last, with flaunting plume  
And glossy sides, the chariot of the tomb !

“It was an honour to the town !” they said.  
The old man mused, the widow shook her head.

Back to its wooden house, amidst the throng,  
The idol of the day was borne along.  
And all that day they feasted on the sight,  
And spent in ale and gossip half the night.

And there it dwelt full forty years and more,  
And child and mother, son and sire, it bore  
Down to the silent tomb, until at last,  
Of all who had in the forgotten past  
Its advent hailed, but few remained to tell  
What mirth and clamour on that day befell.

But earthly grandeur has its little day,  
And must, like man, surrender to decay.  
Year after year it old and crazy grew,  
And through its chinks the winter tempests blew.  
The worm was busy in its mouldering frame,  
And foul reproach was heaped upon its name.

Until 'twas doomed to stand, inert, alone,  
Its ancient prestige and employment gone.  
Its wooden house, with tufts of moss bedeckt,  
No more its age from insult could protect.  
By night the vagrant easy entrance found,  
And slept within or 'neath it on the ground ;  
By day it was the favourite resort  
Of boys from school, to ply their noisy sport.  
Perched on its box, a mimic driver held  
Fictitious reins, and fancied steeds impelled ,  
Whilst down below rose shout and fierce debate,  
Where erst the dead had lain in solemn state.  
And as caprice evoked a different mood,  
A ready target for their aim it stood ;  
And as a stone a rib or rafter split,  
A loud huzza announced the happy hit.  
And—worst of all—its plumes were reckless torn  
From out their place, and in derision worn  
In cap and bonnet, to be flung anon  
Upon the dusty ground, and trod upon,  
Or torn by dogs, and scattered here and there,  
Which watchful sparrow picked up to repair

Its piebald nest ; and winds would fragments pitch  
Into the ash-pit foul or stagnant ditch.

And last of all, by piecemeal, plank and spoke,  
It vanished from the earth in chimney-smoke.

“Sic transit”—but the moral is so stale,  
That to repeat it were of small avail.

## MOTHER EARTH

---

**MOTHER Earth : mother Earth :**  
**Thou hast nursed us and caressed us,**  
    **Since our birth ;**  
**In thy furs and fibres dressed us,**  
**And with food and shelter blessed us,**  
    **Mother Earth !**

**Know we well that each in turn,**  
**To thy bosom will return,**  
    **Mother Earth !**  
**For 'tis fixed beyond recall,**  
**Thou'lt outlive thy children all,**  
    **Mother Earth !**

Mother Earth ! mother Earth !  
Not to souls didst thou give birth,  
Mother Earth !  
Thou didst furnish their abode ;  
But these souls are breath from God,  
Mother Earth !

Mother Earth ! there comes a day  
When in flames thou'lt pass away,  
Mother Earth !  
And the dust we back deliver  
Shall revive and live for ever,  
Mother Earth !

Contradiction strange and wild—  
Mortal mother, deathless child,  
Mother Earth !  
Deathless thou whilst time shall last,  
Deathless they when time is past,  
Mother Earth !

Mother Earth ! dear mother Earth !  
Thou hast cared for and caressed us,  
    Since our birth ;  
To thy bosom fondly pressed us,  
And with countless blessings blest us,  
    Mother Earth !

Take our blessings, too, we pray thee,  
All the love and thanks we pay thee,  
    Mother Earth !  
Dear for ever to our heart  
Thou shalt be, though we must part,  
    Mother Earth !

## THE BEAUTIFUL IN DEATH.

## I.

DECAY betimes a richer beauty shows  
Than can the eye in ripest beauty trace ;  
And death imparts a statuesque repose  
To forms and features which were void of grace.  
A mantle green the Spring around her throws,  
With sunset hues the robe of Autumn glows.

I love to gather from the waning year  
A votive chaplet for the Winter's brow,  
Made up of mosses, ferns, and foliage sear,  
In which the rainbow's varied tints appear,


Not brief as blush evoked by lover's vow,  
But hues which years hence shall be bright as now.

•

The beautiful in death ! things lovely in decay !  
Whose beauty is arrested ere it goes ;  
And these amongst wild amaranths I lay,  
Whose home I found on mountain far away,  
Where pipes the curlew and the heathbell grows,  
And from whose breast a limpid streamlet flows.

The wreath becomes old Winter's hoary head ;  
And half his mood demure he puts away,  
As thus embellished by the radiant dead,  
A smile sedate is o'er his features spread ;  
And he is quietly cheerful, almost gay,  
As age when it unbends and joins in youthful play.

Ye children of the summer, much I love  
To look upon you in your winter home !  
For ye recall where I was wont to rove,  
In woods below or 'mong the heights above,





And gleaned you, wet with dew or cascade's foam,  
And brought you here to this your second home.

•

But your *suggestive* power is not confined  
To scenes which saw your birth,—mine own you bring  
With vivid force before the startled mind,  
When childhood ranged with rapture unconfined,  
And chased the butterfly upon the wing,  
Or paused to pluck the flower and hear the wild bird  
sing.

Nor only turn you o'er with hand unseen  
Those earlier folds in Memory's mystic scroll,  
But pleasant passages which intervene  
'Twixt youth and manhood, or which since have been.  
And if you can the past so far unroll,  
May God not lay before the conscious soul  
Its simultaneous life in one illumined whole?

But not alone with biographic zeal  
Do ye recall these records of the past;  
But, smit with beauty of the mind, you steal

Into the shelved apartments which conceal  
The hoarded caskets and the treasures vast  
Which Genius has from age to age amassed.

And oft you lead me, as a page might do,  
Through shifting galleries and corridors,  
Where Art unfolds her miracles to view,  
In types transfigured, yet to nature true,  
And o'er them thus that subtle magic pours  
Which Music loves and Minstrelsy adores.

Nor *moral* beauty is by you forgot  
(Higher than that of matter or of mind)—  
You point with frequent finger to the spot  
Where died philanthropist or patriot,  
Or where, for sacred truth and for mankind,  
The steadfast martyr in his dungeon pined.

And oft you lead the way to some far nook,  
Where stands a shepherd's bleak and lone abode,  
Whose only sceptre is his hazel crook,  
And whose chief treasure is one blessed book ;

And yet that peasant owns a special road,  
An angel-beaten pathway, up to God.

Hail, band immortal ! elect of all lands !  
Immortal made, not by a nation's tears,  
And not with Egypt's gums and swathing-bands,  
But with elixir mixed by God's own hands,  
Which shall preserve its virtue when the spheres  
Shall cease for man to dole out days and years.

Another band I see with laurel crowned,  
And set on pedestals and chairs of state !  
These are the earthly great, the world's renowned,  
Whom God has weighed, but most has wanting found—  
The greatly bad, the base and lacquered great,  
Whose spurious fame contempt and scorn await.

The good alone are noble, rich, and blest ;  
For earthly titles with their holders die,  
And pass not with them into yonder sky ;—  
But those of honours from above possess

Can point to patents of nobility  
Which waste of time and stroke of death defy.

Ah ! vainly for their idols men demand  
A lasting niche, destruction to forestall :  
Time will not hold them up at their command,  
But lets them drop by thousands from its hand ;  
And down at last into those depths they fall,  
Where night and silence claim and keep them all.

## II.

But back again I come to you, sweet flowers,  
As to the ark came back, all drenched and cold,  
The dove that had been out for weary hours  
Above the waste of waters. Thus, dear flowers,  
I come again sweet intercourse to hold,  
And lessons draw from your suggestive powers ;  
For though your beauty charms me, yet I prize  
Those musings more which at your bidding rise.

---

How sweet it is to find you still the same—  
The same kind looks, unchanged by time or guile—  
The same collected gaze of coloured flame,  
As have your sisters in the sky, whose name  
Bespeaketh vagrancy, and yet the while  
Preserve their earnest look and fond maternal smile!

All change around you. Summer comes and goes,  
And lays its welcome garlands in your way ;  
But death, ere long, their drooping eyelids close,  
And what was fragrant soon offensive grows ;  
And you are forced, with Abraham, to say,  
“ Take, I entreat you, take these dead away ! ”

As stars 'mong meteors, so are ye 'mong flowers ;  
These fade and die, but ye of life keep hold,  
And enter straightway those perennial bowers  
Where beauty reigns with undecaying powers,  
Like him who tasted not of death of old,  
Whose mantle fell as heavenward he rolled.

Prolonged reflections of the summer's beams !  
Arrested echoes of the songs of birds,  
And of the quivering leaves and warbling streams !  
That steal like distant music, heard in dreams,  
Into the passive soul, which pleased ungirds  
Itself, and listens to the tale that is not told in words.

Imprisoned sunbeams !—do you sorrow feel  
For yon bright home you left so far away ?—  
And do the exile's longings o'er you steal,  
When night and sleep in silence all things seal ?  
Ah no ! you do not mourn the absent day,  
Else would you not by midnight lamp be gay.

And deftly-chiselled palaces have ye,  
Celestial emigrants, in which to dwell,—  
Abodes endowed by craft of chemistry  
To bear the brunt of winter's icy sky.  
And do not these by type and symbol tell  
Of brighter homes where saint and angel dwell ?

Ye fair survivors of a race gone by !  
Mysterious posthumists of summer's reign !  
Who stole the drops of rainbow from the sky  
To give those forms that many-tinted dye ?  
Wilt thou like dumb mysterious sphinx remain,  
Nor briefest answer to our questions deign ?

A ready answer ye return to each,  
And promptly point to Him who sent you forth,—  
And what your errand is you frankly teach,  
For language does not end with human speech ;  
And thus you tell the story of your birth,  
Which points to Heaven whilst it speaks of earth.

And were you left as angels were of old,  
To warn the thoughtless and sustain the true,  
And tell the tale which has so oft been told,  
But needed still, though ages past have rolled,—  
“That man is feeble, and his days are few,  
But is, though mortal, yet immortal too” ?

The first and last, the utmost scope of time,  
Is but as one pulsation of the heart  
Of vast eternity. Duration so sublime  
Shall man forget, and with his birthright part?  
Or shall he doubt that God has ample power  
To make a soul immortal as a flower,

And give it force to wing its rapid way  
Beyond the stars to amaranthine bowers,  
As He gave wings to each successive ray  
That pulsed along from forth its parent Day,  
Until it reached those small and distant flowers,  
And virtue lent to give unfading powers?

If dumb insensate matter may be taught  
To smile at death,—may Mind not also be?—  
Mind! that with higher aims and ends is fraught,  
And vested with the godlike power of thought!  
Speak, lovely dead!—dumb monitors reply,—  
“And tell the soul that it can never die.”



Or is Omnipotence unfit to put  
An endless life in man's refashioned dust?—  
Or even now to plant, by germ or root,  
A power from which a deathless life shall shoot,  
As certainly as seeds upborne by passing gust  
And dropt in fitting graves give back their sacred  
trust?

No matter when, or where, or how it be,  
Enough to know that there is will and power.  
That there is will, God's word gives warranty ;  
That there is power, proofs heaped and countless lie,  
Not only in these shining worlds that tower  
Above our heads, but in the meanest flower  
That opes its ruby lips to drink the summer shower.

## III.

But why should I repeat the various themes  
With which you entertain my private mind ?  
Your speech is endless as the endless streams,  
And comes all pictured as it does in dreams,  
Though oft indeed it is not what it seems—

“An idle tale for vacant hours designed,  
To pass away and leave no good behind.”

Last links between the living and the dead !  
Bright starry heralds of a morn of bliss !  
Hope at your bidding lifts the drooping head,  
That bends and weeps above the buried dead,  
And bids the needless tear go back unshed,  
And dark distrust its groundless fears dismiss.

Friends let me call you !—almost old friends now—  
And age in friendship is a precious thing ;  
Unchanging friends !—across whose equal brow  
Cloud never passed, more than is passing now ;  
Purest of friends !—for never did you bring,  
E'en in your wildest freaks, one wrong imagining.

Friends beautiful and innocent and gay !—  
The home and haunt of all things good and fair,  
As Eden was, ere Eve was led astray.  
Delightful friends !—how oft you chase away

The gathering clouds, and fill with visions rare  
The bright and busy depths of the enchanted air !

Enchanted, did I say ? ah yes ! 'tis even so ;  
For ne'er did wizard's wand or fairy's spell  
More quickly conjure up or feast or show  
To errant knight, or hermit in his cell,  
Than you can sense of outward things dispel,  
And in their place make brilliant pageants glow.


Most versatile of friends !—all parts you take,  
And each in turn, as it may pleasure yield,—  
Now bidding Memory's dormant powers awake,  
Now prompting pantomimes for Fancy's sake ;  
And then uplifting falchion, trump, and shield,  
You summon Reason to the listed field.

What shall I call you ? Little philanthropes ?  
Mute homilists ? evangels from the skies ?  
Tiny astrologers ? whose horoscopes  
Were haply cast to shadow forth the hopes

Which in the humble Christian's breast arise,  
And point above to bliss that never dies.

Or shall I other strain adopt, and greet  
You in this wise,—Minstrels of song innate !  
Outriders gay in Memory's motley suite !  
Bright couriers sent the approaching Muse to meet !  
Prismatic loiterers at Wisdom's gate !  
Disciples seated at Religion's feet !

I love to call you many, many things,  
For love is fruitful in endearing names,  
And sweetness oft from changed expression springs,  
As when the wind slow wandering over strings  
Will sometimes deal a different stroke that brings  
A new rich chord, which instant audience claims,  
And striking home, the languid soul inflames.  
And love is garrulous like grief and age,  
And fondly thinks its joys are shared by all.—  
But all too late arrives this maxim sage  
To save me from that fault of grief and age,—



And even yet thoughts rise, in prison brawl,  
Throng at the bars and loud for exit call.

Since, then, I must desist—let me recall  
Your oft-repeated counsel and command,  
Which haply may on ears attentive fall,  
And give them power temptation to withstand.  
“Tell youth, you urged, to hold by virtue fast,  
For she alone imparts the joys that last !—  
The joys that last !—press this upon their mind,—  
Not pleasures brief that leave a sting behind ;  
And if 'gainst vice a constant war they wage,  
What we to winter are, their life shall be to age.”

Farewell a while !—you brought my heart relief,  
By bringing back the loved and sainted dead  
In such sweet guise, that soon a mellowed grief,  
A rich delicious sadness, joy not grief,  
Arose at their approach, and oft the dear belief  
Would for a moment o'er my senses spread,  
That I stood face to face and gazed upon the dead ;

And when they vanished, I would follow fast,  
And enter in at heaven's open door,  
And see them down their crowns and sceptres cast  
Before the throne of Shiloh as they passed,—  
And then retreating back on heaven's floor,  
A loud and glorious anthem forth would pour,—  
“These are the joys that last !—I whispered o'er and  
o'er.”

And let me add how many joys we lose  
In all things round us, full of varied good,  
Because we in our stubborn pride refuse  
To sit down humbly at their feet, and muse  
On what they say, which, rightly understood,  
Does heart and head, and soul and body good.

We think we know them, for we've seen them oft,  
And long ago got all they have to say :  
So thinks the savage when he looks aloft  
Upon the starry sky ; so thinketh oft  
The worldling of that Book, which day by day  
Has lain, since youth, as lumber in his way.

He who would read the books of God aright,  
Must read them from the alphabet anew,  
And reading thus, an ever-fresh delight  
An hundred-fold his labours will requite,  
And bring increasing wonders into view  
Of all that's good, and beautiful, and true.

Once more, dear friends, in parting, let me say,  
To you of right a thousand thanks belong ;  
For as the play of clouds, or songs of birds,  
Or music's charms, or poet's glowing words—  
All this, and more, you've been to me, and long,  
My bosom friends, my solace, and my song.

TO THE SWORD.

---

WHAT shall we call thee, great high priest of blood ?  
Dictator—pioneer—god—fiend—or fate ?  
First-born of love ?—or eldest-born of hate ?  
Herald of ill ?—or harbinger of good ?

Thou reck'st not praise or blame, or smiles or frowns,  
While sleep securely in thy narrow sheath  
Or peace and life, or latent war and death,  
The fame of heroes and the fate of crowns.

Thine edge the statesman's visor pierceth through,  
And o'er thy blade, as in a mystic glass,  
Projected empires in procession pass,  
And with thy point thou mapp'st out earth anew.

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The red-lined atlas, or in love or hate,  
The prostrate world implicitly must take,  
And disaffection her obeisance make,—  
For thy awards are the decrees of fate.

By myriads thou hast fed the hungry grave—  
Next to disease chief myrmidon of death—  
Releasing seas of blood, and skies of breath,  
And soaking earth, and staining ocean's wave.

The earth is filled with trophies of thy might,  
And storied pillars pointing to the stars,  
'Mong which appears thine own conspicuous Mars,  
The crimson king and war-god of the night.

Dead languages and races perished long,  
And battle-pits to ruined cities linked,  
And wandering kings and dynasties extinct,  
Proclaim thy prowess, and thy fame prolong.

From out thy spoils huge capitals have sprung,  
And gorgeous palaces and temples vast,  
Which filled with glory the colossal past,  
And round its brow unfading laurels hung.

From thee her chief materials history draws ;  
And sculpture with thine inspiration teems ;  
And painting owes to thee her loftiest themes ;  
And poetry her epic life and laws.

All nations make to thee their last appeal,  
Thou final arbiter of fighting man ;—  
And thou repliest, in blessing or in ban,  
By sharp decision of thy gleaming steel.

Forth from thy scabbard promptly dost thou spring  
To mix in quarrels, righteous or unjust ;  
To aid ambition, liberty, or lust,  
Caprice of courtesan or whim of king.

---

Tyrant and patriot are alike to thee—

Alike to thee the right side or the wrong ;  
Or wrong or right, thou sidest with the strong,  
And giv'st to might, not right, the victory.

Lands locked in ice, or sweltering in the sun,  
Rank, creed, or law, philosophy or art,  
No partial sympathies to thee impart,—  
The tool of all, and partisan of none.

Fear marches in thy front ; and in thy rear  
Destruction comes with desolating breath ;  
And close behind rush pestilence and death,  
And haggard famine prowling far and near.


Rigid and stern as winter round the pole,  
Thou passest on, unmoved by orphan's sigh,  
By widow's tear, or childless mother's cry,  
Or dying soldier's agony of soul.

Flinging abroad, for good ends or for ill,  
Maces and mitres, coronets and crowns ;  
Destroying temples and rebuilding towns,  
And making gods, or crushing them at will.

Now thrusting hordes of savages aside,  
Or smiting down an old and worn-out State,  
And mixing up the nations small and great,  
Despite their hatred, prejudice, and pride.

Yea, even He who said to all things "Be!"  
And turns man's pride and passion to His praise,  
Reveals His wisdom, and His power displays,  
And opens pathways for His truth, by thee.

And oft thy passive power preventeth harm ;  
Full oft secreted in thy silent sheath  
Thou smit'st incipient treason in the teeth,  
And blightest civil discord in the germ.



All good to evil turns when misapplied,  
And what is best is parent to the worst ;  
Thus first becomes the last, and last the first,  
As actions lean to vice or virtue's side.

And is it doomed thy brilliant reign shall cease,  
And they shall hang thee in the idle hall,  
A blunted relic, rusting on the wall,  
The butt and plaything of ignoble peace ?

Or turned to ploughshare or to pruning-hook,  
And set to trim the hedge or turn the clods,  
Which once to men decreed their kings and gods,  
And kingdoms saved, or mighty empires shook ?

And shall the future bard reverse his lays,  
And dastard orator malign thy fame,  
And base historian desecrate thy name,  
And scoff at pæans chanted in thy praise ?

Then farewell, cries Ambition, farewell fame !  
The wreath-clad brow ! the venerable scar !  
And all the pomp and pageantry of war,  
And arts transmissive of the world's acclaim !

The poetry of earth will fall with thee—  
Its sculptured columns, battlements, and walls ;  
And prosy peace shall sit in drowsy halls,  
And commerce plough the disenchanted sea.

## THE RED SEA.

---

Six thousand years have passed away  
    Since time its course began,  
And all along its troubled way,  
    Man slew his fellow-man.  
Four thousand millions, maimed or killed,  
Have thus their blood in battle spilled.

\*        \*        \*        \*        \*

I saw a sea, a deep dead sea,  
    Like that where Sodom stood,  
And into it a river ran,  
    A stream of human blood ;

And all its banks were stained with red,  
And war its crimson current fed.

Loud shouts betimes and wailings came  
As from some dreadful fray ;  
And now they swelled upon the breeze,  
And then they died away :  
Anon was heard a deafening cry,  
The shout of some great victory.

That stream which erst like summer brook  
A scanty volume showed,  
Now rushing came in deluge down,  
And all its banks o'erflowed ;  
And into that dead sea it swept,  
And up its shelving sides it leapt.

Its rugged shores and yawning caves  
A brighter hue displayed,  
And redder than the setting sun  
From side to side it swayed ;



And when the silver moon arose,  
It purpled lay in calm repose.

Out from a creek a shallop came  
And glided on its way,  
And near its prow, 'midst piles of arms,  
A mailed giant lay.  
He was, I deemed, the god of war,  
Come forth to meet his elect star,  
And take his pleasure in that tide,  
Which proved his power and nursed his pride.

\* \* \* \* \*

A white throne in the heaven hangs  
Above that sea of blood,  
And countless cries for vengeance come  
From out its seething flood.  
“Be still!” He cries, who fills the throne—  
And all is hushed and still as stone;  
“The books are in their order set,  
And each his due award shall get!”

THE FALLEN OAK.

---

SOLE remnant of a forest old,  
Once seen afar distinct and bold,  
    On yonder distant height,  
With head uplifted to the sky  
You saw the ages passing by  
    Upon their solemn flight.

When twilight's gentle breeze awoke,  
Thy myriad boughs in music spoke  
    So holy and so calm,  
That, halting on his homeward way,  
The shepherd, musing, pleased would stay  
    To hear thy evening psalm.

And when arose the midnight storm,  
Thou girdedst up thy mighty form,  
    And shoutedst from afar,  
As shouts a giant in the fight,  
When vanquished foes he puts to flight  
    And turns the tide of war.

All gently on thine honoured head,  
The spring her greenest glories spread ;  
    As childhood in its freaks  
Will deck with leaves and lilies fair  
The tangles of the old man's hair,  
    And kiss his withered cheeks.

At summer noon the sheep would rest  
Beneath thy cool umbrageous breast ;  
    And hunted stag with lolling tongue  
Would toil to reach thy leafy dome ;  
And every year the birds would come,  
And make thy sheltering boughs their home,  
    And rear their callow young.

And oft beneath thy hallowed shade,  
The wandering bard his couch hath made,  
    And ate his noontide meal ;  
And 'neath thy roof from age to age  
Have sat the lover and the sage ;  
And there full oft in hostile rage  
    Has flashed the deadly steel.

The children in the summer prime  
With song and shout to thee would climb  
    To spend the livelong day ;  
And often in their after-years  
Would think and speak of thee with tears,  
    When wanderers far away.

In winter 'twas a glorious sight,  
When lay the snow in masses white  
    Upon thy branches broad ;  
And when the full-orbed moon arose,  
And glorified thy sculptured snows,  
Thou seem'dst the tree of life that grows  
    Upon the mount of God.

But ah ! how changed thy form appears !  
Proud patriarch of a thousand years,  
    Thou liest a ruin vast !  
With many a wound and ancient scar,  
Thy brawny arms stretched out afar,  
Amidst the elemental war  
    Laid low on earth at last.

No more the weary foot will bless thee,  
Nor passing cloud nor breeze caress thee,  
And every bird and beast will miss thee,  
    From thy accustomed place ;  
And looking up with tearful eye,  
The old man, 'gainst the vacant sky,  
Will point where thou wert wont to lie,  
    Last of thy mighty race.

THE JUL-JULS ;  
OR,  
THE FOLK IN THE CLOUDS.


---

Know ye not that earth and air,  
And the waters everywhere,  
Are not waste and lifeless regions ?  
Not a spring or stream that flows,  
Not a leaf or flower that blows,  
Not a blade of grass that grows,  
But is peopled with its legions.  
Nature, economic, wise,  
Spare her means, but multiplies  
Her ends benign, nor leaves a spot  
Where useful tenant dwelleth not.

Deem it not a wonder, then,  
Though the clouds, as earth with men,  
Should with living creatures teem,  
Though to man they empty seem.  
Listen, then, and we will tell  
Who and what are they that dwell  
'Mongst the clouds that roll on high  
Through the archway of the sky.

Like elves and fairies down below,  
A human form and face they show  
    Of tiny pedigree ;  
And though the thin elastic air  
Their slim ethereal forms can bear,  
A pair of filmy wings they wear,  
    And fly o'er land and sea.  
They can at will themselves contract,  
And yet preserve their shapes intact ;  
And when exertion languor brings,  
They sleep infolded 'neath their wings ;  
And like chameleons, as they range  
From place to place, their hue they change ;

And thus, or in repose or flight,  
Can hide themselves from mortal sight.  
And often, too, in showery weather,  
They blend themselves in sport together,  
And form mock rainbows in the sky,  
Or through the air as meteors fly ;  
And sometimes, too, of winter nights,  
They play at mimic Northern Lights—  
Or down to earth their visits pay,  
To see how man is making way,—  
For they, their own remarks to make,  
In man's affairs an interest take.  
And not unoft they put to flight  
The thief that prowls abroad by night,  
By flashing forth, with flaming wing,  
The likeness of some spectral thing ;  
Or when the reeling sot they meet,  
In lonely place or silent street,  
They whisper something in his ear  
Which fills his muddled brain with fear—  
And off he sets with staggering gait,  
Till, gaining speed, he runneth straight,





While laughter shrill, in ringing peals,  
Pursues and follows at his heels.  
And having had their evening sport,  
They upward to their clouds resort.

'Tis said they some rare liquor quaff,  
And in their cups do jeer and laugh,  
At regal man's expense ;  
And point their shafts of ridicule  
Alike at sage, and saint, and fool,  
Who act, they say, by whim, not rule—

From folly, not from sense.  
And in their revels they resort  
To pulpit, bench, and camp and court,  
And force all grades of men to sit  
And be the target of their wit.  
What brazen impudence is here !  
Are they devoid of shame and fear,  
To make the sovereign lord of earth  
The subject of their wanton mirth ?  
'Twere well that they his wrath should feel,  
From cannon-ball, if not by steel,

And learn, what man alone can teach,  
That they are not beyond his reach ;  
Of if beyond it, soon will he  
Obtain o'er them the mastery.

The blear-eyed owls !—they little think,  
That they at faults and foibles wink

Which to themselves belong !

But let that pass—for time is brief,  
And time misspent begetteth grief ;  
But time improved imparts relief

To every human wrong.

And surely it is well to know  
Who dwells above us, as below ;  
Or bad or good, or great or small,  
'Tis well that we should know them all :  
For if the time should come when we  
Shall travel, not by land or sea,  
But through the medium of the air,  
They may with us their knowledge share  
How we from coming storms may fly,  
And reach those currents of the sky

Whose friendly course and impulse may  
Impel and guide us on our way,  
And by the safest, shortest road,  
Convey us homeward or abroad—  
For they, by long experience wise,  
Must know the secrets of the skies.

Nor is this hope an idle dream,  
As it at partial glance might seem ;

For when Pilâtre rose  
Like some projectile to the clouds,  
They rushed in swift and eager crowds,  
And clung to car, and silk, and shrouds,

His passage to oppose ;  
Nor left it till it sank again,  
Down to the homes and haunts of men :  
Then council held,—and some had fear  
That some impending ill was near—  
Some foul invasion, plot, or plan,  
Projected by ambitious man ;  
And argued that they should devise  
Some scheme to scare him from the skies.

But others thought that man could ne'er  
Support his brute weight long in air ;  
Whilst others more courageous said,  
They were not in the least afraid ;—  
“ At any rate,” cried one, “ ’tis better  
To keep a sharp eye on the matter ;  
And if the thing is oft repeated,  
By all means let it be defeated.”

Meanwhile these creatures light and gay  
In merry gambols spend the day,  
And play a thousand pranks.  
Sometimes they fly from peak to peak,  
Or dive, and play at hide-and-seek,  
And then in childish wanton freak  
Roll down the steep cloud's flanks.  
And when the sun's descending rays  
Set all the cloud-lands in a blaze,  
And golden towers in clusters rise,  
And dip their heads into the skies,  
And bluffs below, and gulfs appear,  
And plains expand in front and rear,

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Here in a maze of jungle lost,  
And there all rippled and embosst,  
And over all the shifting light,  
To ever-changing views invite,—  
They sit with folded wing, or stand,  
And gaze upon the gorgeous land,  
And say, "This land, the brightest far  
Beheld by sun, or moon, or star,  
Is ours since light upon it shone,  
And ours shall be, and ours alone."

From day to day their sports they change,—  
Now climbing up a cloudy range,  
Or o'er its summit flying ;  
And then as sweeps the eagle by,  
They give him instant chase, and try  
Who first upon his back will lie,  
And set him loud a-crying ;  
Then down perchance they swoop and scare,  
The pirates of the lower air,  
Which wheel and hang on balanced wing,  
Alert upon their prey to spring.

Whilst some, mayhap in pensive mood,  
Meander through a mimic wood,  
Or sit apart in cloud ravine,  
And meditate upon the scene.

Whilst others, smit with love of art,  
Will cause a giant's head to start  
From out the passing cloud—or mould  
An aged oak, or ruin old,  
Or leaning tower, and then anon  
Cut out a sphinx or mastodon,—  
For they can shape with rapid wing,  
The yielding mass to any thing :  
But, swift as stars at break of day,  
These airy sculptures melt away.

When stars look out with lustrous eyes,  
And moonlight streams athwart the skies,  
Abroad they come in crowds  
To gaze upon the tranquil scene,  
So white, majestic, and serene,  
With blue o'erhead, and breaks between  
The far-extending clouds.

Uprising sharply here and there  
Tall peaks of cloud indent the air,  
And white as wool, and smooth as glass,  
They shine above yon Alpine pass.  
Here pearly plains salute the eye,  
And yonder crags in shadow lie,  
With here and there wide gaps that take  
The form of river, creek, or lake ;  
And in the distance mellowed lie,  
The icy scenes of Polar sky ;  
While far away, its azure bound,  
The wide horizon gathers round.

In groups, or singly, to and fro,  
They hither come, or thither go,  
    With nod, and beck, and smile ;  
Or passing to a cloud-built height,  
They gaze on the enchanting sight,  
And drink in deep and rich delight,  
    And muse and talk the while.  
And oft they lift the grateful eye  
To her who rules the nightly sky,

And brings with her a brilliant train  
Of countless stars to grace her reign,  
And sheds her borrowed light around,  
All chaste and soft as mellowed sound.  
Away into the upper air,  
In stray detachments they repair ;  
And, looking down, they forward lean,  
To gaze, enraptured, on the scene  
Which stretches out afar and near,  
With mountains yonder, valleys here,  
And breaks between, which seem to be  
The breaches of some inland sea.  
And evermore dissolves the view,  
And passes into something new,  
Until at last, by sleep o'erborne,  
They fold their wings and sleep till morn.

When comes a calm autumnal sky,  
And clouds in triple strata lie  
    A mile or so apart,  
The lowest tier in shadow flung,  
The next by fretted roof o'erhung



Of fleecy clouds, with flecks among,  
    Disposed with nicest art,  
They come together from afar  
To test their skill in mimic war,  
And try their strength in list and ring,  
And prove their speed by foot and wing ;  
Or, leaping down in giddy mirth  
From highest cloud to lowest earth,  
They try who first the peak shall gain,  
From whence they flung themselves amain ;  
And other feats and games they try  
Peculiar to their native sky.  
And when the day's amusement's done  
They crown the victors one by one,  
And forthwith join in banquet high,  
Until her zenith in the sky  
The moon has passed, and then they taste  
The farewell cup, and homeward haste.

As fancy prompts, from time to time,  
They emigrate from clime to clime,

As birds of passage do ;  
Yet tastes of various sorts they own  
For frigid or for torrid zone,  
And some to temperate skies are prone,  
Like men of different hue.  
Some like to live above the sea,  
And some above the land to be ;  
But all those naked regions shun  
Which cloudless lie beneath the sun,  
And fly those lands in summer time  
Whose thirsty skies no vapours climb :  
For though through empty space they roam,  
They ever count the clouds their home,  
And weary when they have to fly  
Through desert tracts of open sky,  
And hail with shout and outspread hand,  
As sailors greet approaching land,  
When they upon the distant sky  
Their loved aerial homes descry ;  
And as they fly with nimble wing,  
They blithely talk or gaily sing.

When sultry clouds in masses form,  
And token give of thunderstorm,  
    To upper skies they soar,  
And downward gaze, and eager watch  
Which cloud shall first apply the match ;  
And as the first bright flash they catch,  
    And hear the first loud roar,  
They flap their wings and shout aloud,  
And cheer as each successive cloud  
From east to west, from south to north,  
Its flash and volley sendeth forth,  
As cheers a crowd when fireworks fly  
In gleaming cohorts through the sky.  
And sometimes downward will they start,  
And in the *mêlée* take a part—  
Rush through the thickest of the fight,  
And clap their hands in wild delight ;  
And if by streak of lightning struck,  
The wounded part they promptly suck,  
And ere a second well has flown,  
The slight paralysis is gone.

And then, again, they heedless dash  
Between the volley and the flash ;  
Or into riven cloud they jump,  
And down descend with thunder-plump  
To see what trees are split asunder,  
And hear the mountain-torrents thunder,  
And mark the gait and visage wan,  
Of proud, imperious, coward man.

High carnival they hold of nights,  
When shoot abroad the Northern Lights,  
Or fitful meteors glow.  
But nought does such delight supply  
To those storm-petrels of the sky  
As when the tempests blow ;  
For as the clouds go rushing past,  
Like routed hosts before the blast,  
Down on their crests themselves they cast,  
And on with them they go.  
Away they fly o'er hill and heath,  
And see the forests rend beneath,

And men, like drunkards, swerve and sway,  
And roofs fly up, and towers give way.  
And when they reach the briny deep,  
They see the foaming billows sweep,  
And vessels tossing to and fro,  
Or plunged into the depths below ;  
And as the curving tempest flies,  
Away they shoot to other skies ;  
And when its frenzied fury's spent,  
They mount into the firmament,  
And take the current retrograde  
Which best their homeward flight will aid ;  
And when they reach it, weary they,  
With toil and revel of the day,  
To nearest clouds they go to sleep,  
And soon are lost in slumbers deep.  
But in their dreams they fly again  
O'er hill and vale and surging main,  
And wave their wings, and shout betimes,  
And snatches sing of tempest chimes,  
Which they are wont to chant while they  
By furious blasts are borne away.

Ah ! had I wings, how oft would I  
Away to these cloud regions fly,  
And pleasant pastime hold ;  
Go with the Jul-Juls in their flights,  
And mingle in their wild delights,  
And see the grand and wondrous sights  
Which cloud and sky unfold ;  
Behold, in panoramic show,  
The distant earth outstretched below,  
And see the ships, in endless train,  
Career like sea-fowl o'er the main,  
And leave behind all earthly care,  
And be with them a child of air !  
But vain the wish, though not in vain  
That wish may always so remain ;  
For Art to Man may open throw  
The sea above as that below,  
Where ships of air may safely go.  
Meanwhile those legends rare I'll con  
Which make to us those Jul-Juls known,  
That I may tell some other day  
The gist of what these legends say

About their loves and wars and spites,  
Their marriage feasts and burial rites,  
And their strange ways of doing things,  
Those creatures of the clouds with wings.

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